



House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 133

NUMBER 140

1st SESSION

35th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 8, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 8, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

The Speaker: I have a notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I am going to allow the question of privilege because yesterday, in reviewing the blues and what was said, I found that perhaps I acted a little hastily in cutting off the member. I am going to allow some additional information to be put on the record.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was seeking to make the point that a publication of the House, admittedly in conjunction with the National Archives of Canada, contained a substantial error in that it failed to mention in the list of constituencies for Canada's first Prime Minister the fact that he was the member for Kingston.

I raise this point in some seriousness. I know it was treated with a bit of merriment yesterday afternoon. This particular Prime Minister was identified closely with the Kingston community. He represented Kingston in either the legislature or in this House from 1844 until 1891, with the exception of a nine-year break between 1878 and 1887 when he represented other constituencies in this House.

He was substantially raised in Kingston. He practised law in Kingston from the age of 19 in the 1830s until 1873. For over 40 years he practised law in Kingston. As I have indicated, he represented that community for a very long time and made a very substantial contribution there. He was buried in Kingston and there are countless statues and monuments to him in Kingston.

To have Kingston omitted from the list of his constituencies is really a shocking omission. With the greatest respect, of all the Prime Ministers in the book he probably had a closer connection with his community and is known to have had that connection

with his community of Kingston than all the other prime ministers had with their communities.

My point is that this book ought to be repaired and replaced. It is frankly misleading, particularly to students who I am sure are going to be the principal users of this book. I see that it has a foreword with Your Honour's name on it, it does not have a signature, and another by the national archivist.

From the point of view of accuracy, I think it would be very wise to have the book reprinted. It is an excellent book and a fine publication. It is wrong in this particular. It is a serious enough error that it ought to be corrected.

The Speaker: I do take the hon. member's intervention seriously.

(1005)

My name is associated and therefore the House's name is associated with this publication. That is the reason I permitted the extra information to come on to the record. I will review everything that has been said and, if necessary, I will get back to the House with a decision on this matter.

Also I would like to take a few minutes of the time of the House. In reviewing the blues yesterday and in fairness to all members I want to make a couple of points clear with regard to unparliamentary language.

Something may be unparliamentary in our language today and it may be parliamentary tomorrow. All that to say that no one word in and of itself is always unparliamentary. It is rather the context in which the word is used, the tone in which the word or words are delivered and if there is disorder in the House.

If any one of these things occurs, it is incumbent upon the Chair to interpret what is going on in the House. To say that your Speaker is going to at all times make decisions that are acceptable to all members of Parliament would be hoping for the impossible.

The Chair should have the latitude and will take the latitude to ensure that if a word is used in its tone, in its meaning, in perhaps the disorder it causes in the House then the Chair will intervene at that point. He or she may rule a word unparliamentary.

I want it clear to all members of the House that even the word liar is not always unparliamentary. It will depend in the context in which it is used. However, if one member calls another

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member a liar, that is clearly unparliamentary, and I wanted that to be understood.

To the interveners yesterday, the hon. member from Winnipeg who rose to make the point, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands who made an intervention and the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster who all contributed to the discussion on a point of order, I have taken all your suggestions into account. I want you to have a general feeling of what the Chair and the person in the chair will be looking for when it comes to unparliamentary language.

I hope that this is acceptable to the House and that it will give general directions with regard to the words we are to use in our debates and also in question period. I thank you for your indulgence.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to certain petitions.

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, June 21, 1994, your committee has considered Bill C-37, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code. Your committee has agreed to report it with amendments.

The committee considered the bill for three months, heard 42 witnesses and made 28 amendments. I want to thank members of the committee and witnesses for their contributions and co-operation.

The phase two examination of the Young Offenders Act will take place in the new year.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of

the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, with amendments.

(1010)

FINANCE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to place before the House today, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Finance entitled "Confronting Canada's Deficit Crisis: Building Our Next Budget Through Consultation".

Briefly the report is the result of an unprecedented seven weeks of intensive consultations and study involving members from all three parties. I take this occasion to thank members of the committee from all three parties who brought such diligence to this undertaking.

I also thank all those who have worked with us. Far too often they have not been recognized for what they have done. I talk not only of the many witnesses who appeared before us, often on very short notice, but particularly members of the Library of Parliament who worked with us, especially the clerks to our committee, Christine Trauttmansdorff and our chief clerk, Martine Bresson, and all the people of their staff who have been working 24 hours a day over the last week in order that we could meet this deadline.

We have been extremely well served as parliamentarians by these very devoted public servants.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the chair of the finance committee, I wish to thank the staff, and especially the office of the clerk, for the excellent job they did when the committee was preparing its report and during the committee's public hearings.

Remember that the Official Opposition tabled a dissenting opinion as an appendix to the report of the Liberal majority. Why a dissenting opinion? First of all, because the Bloc Québécois, the Official Opposition, is convinced that the measures supported in the Liberal majority's report do not reflect the vision and the views of Canadians expressed at the public hearings.

Second, there is the prospect of an increase in taxes across the board for all Canadian taxpayers. We cannot support this proposal and we are particularly wary of the statement that the increase will be only temporary.

Third, the Liberal majority's report announces a series of tax increases or at least the prospect of tax increases which will again affect a middle class already taxed to the hilt since 1984.

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Fourth, the report, and this is our main grievance, launches another attack on social programs by proposing cuts in addition to those already announced in the last budget.

Fifth, the report ignores the fact that more jobs can also mean more tax revenue and, in the end, an improvement in the state of Canada's public finances. For all the reasons I just mentioned, readers will see the Official Opposition's dissenting opinion appended to the report.

* * *

PETITIONS

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the privilege to present a petition from 649 members of social organizations called AFEAS—Associations féminines d'éducation et d'action sociale—and of golden age groups.

Whereas the elderly are usually less familiar with the technology of voice mail but still have a right to proper service, especially for their enquiries about income security, the petitioners pray and call upon Parliament and the government to give up the plan to implement voice mail for seniors.

[*English*]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege today of presenting, pursuant to Standing Order 36, a petition signed by many residents of my constituency, specifically from the communities of Marcelin, Rabbit Lake, Hafford, Blaine Lake, Krydor and Leask.

The petitioners state that a very vocal minority of citizens are requesting Parliament to institute a dual marketing system of wheat and barley for export.

(1015)

The petitioners therefore request that Parliament continue to give the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly powers to export wheat and barley. They also request that Parliament expand further Canadian Wheat Board marketing powers to include all grains and oilseeds.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to rise to present a petition on behalf of 458 citizens who ask that the Parliament of Canada protect and take care of human life and human dignity; that physicians should not be working to end lives but to save them.

The petitioners do not want the Criminal Code of Canada changed in any way to suggest that assisted suicide be made legal or countenanced by the state in any way.

I concur with my petitioners.

MINING

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present a petition containing 100 signatures from residents of Nova Scotia petitioning this honourable House to keep mining in Canada.

Canada's mining industry is the mainstay of employment in over 150 communities across Canada, an important contributor to Canada's gross domestic product and total exports and a cornerstone of our economic future.

Therefore the petitioners call on Parliament to take action that will grow employment in this sector, promote exploration, rebuild Canada's mineral reserves, sustain mining communities and keep mining in Canada.

I concur with this petition.

RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition signed by residents of the community of Westlock in my constituency of Athabasca.

The petitioners request that Parliament amend the Divorce Act to include a provision similar to article 611 of the Quebec Civil Code which states: "In no case may a father or mother without serious cause place obstacles between the child and grandparents. Failing agreement between the parties, the modalities of the relations are settled by the court".

They further ask for an amendment to the Divorce Act that would give a grandparent who is granted access to a child the right to make inquiries and to be given information on the health, education and welfare of the child.

I present this petition and support the petitioners.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition to the House on behalf of 199 signatories. It is sponsored by the Responsible Firearms Coalition of B.C. which prays and requests that Parliament refuse to accept the anti-firearms proposals of the Minister of Justice and insists that he bring forward legislation to convict and punish criminals rather than persecute the innocent.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present five petitions to the House. I have petitions with 976 signatures opposing further gun control.

Supply

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are 906 names opposing amendments to the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that include consideration of same sex relationships.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are 163 signatures opposing assisted suicide.

ABORTION

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have 128 signatures opposing abortion.

PORT OF CHURCHILL

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are 127 names requesting that the port of Churchill be recognized as a permanent, major port facility.

I respectfully submit these petitions with my support.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by 210 residents of the city of Toronto protesting discrimination against persons living in same sex relationships.

The petitioners call on Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to adopt all necessary measures to recognize the full equality of same sex relationships in federal law.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(1020)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Honourable members, today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, 1994, the House will now proceed as usual to consider and adopt a supply bill. Considering recent practice, does the House agree that this bill be now distributed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—PROCESS INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ) moved:

That this House enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec in order to allow Quebecers to chart their own political and constitutional future.

He said: Mr. Speaker, there will be a referendum on sovereignty in Quebec. That referendum will be preceded by a broad democratic consultation throughout Quebec.

Federalists, both in Quebec City and in Ottawa, refuse to take part in that consultation process. But before we discuss the reasons why federalists refuse to participate in that debate, we must put that process into perspective, explain its nature and verify its legitimacy, since federalists are questioning its legitimacy.

First of all, let us make it clear that federalists, headed by the present Prime Minister, are in a very bad position to talk about legitimacy, respect for democracy and clarity. Remember that the present Prime Minister was responsible for patriating the Constitution in 1982. Remember also that there was absolutely no consultation when the Constitution was patriated. There was no referendum. The Quebec National Assembly was against that patriation. The opposition leader in Quebec city and Liberal Party leader, Daniel Johnson, denounced that patriation.

Just recently, during the election campaign in Quebec, it was again the present Prime Minister, with the hon. member for Sherbrooke, who was responsible for the demise of the Meech Lake Accord, through the Charest report, and with the help of Clyde Wells, from Newfoundland, and the help of the present member for Churchill, in Manitoba, who is sitting in this House today.

Quebecers do not need any advice on democracy from the current Prime Minister because the process proposed by the Government of Quebec is entirely legitimate, clear and democratic.

In fact, that process derives directly from the Bélanger–Campeau Commission, which we should not forget. This commission said there were two options: renewed federalism and sovereignty. However, a referendum was held in Quebec as well as in all other parts of Canada on renewed federalism Charlotte-town style. The Charlottetown Accord was rejected by Que-

Supply

becers because it was not enough for Quebec and by the rest of Canada because it was too much for Quebec. So only one option remains: sovereignty.

That is the rationale behind the Bélanger–Campeau report, which was signed by Robert Bourassa, Daniel Johnson and all the members on that commission, except the current Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Government of Quebec must act upon the Bélanger–Campeau report. The question is how. With the proposed consultation process. I have difficulty understanding why the federal government is opposed to such a consultation process since that is all we have been doing here for over a year.

The Committee on Human Resources Development is holding consultations everywhere in Canada, the finance committee just did the same; the Minister of Justice consults left and right without proposing anything concrete to this House. All these consultations are being held without a clear plan, without a bill. They consult for the sake of consulting. On the contrary, the Government of Quebec's initiative is based on a bill, a draft bill which is clear and specific and proposes a plan. To me, this is democracy, this is consultation.

(1025)

Federalists tell us that there is only one option, a plan for sovereignty. What an amazing discovery, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, it is a plan for sovereignty because a pro-sovereignty government was elected in Quebec in September. What is surprising about a government proposing a plan to achieve its option? The opposite would have been surprising.

As I recall, Meech and Charlottetown were federalist projects. We were not scandalized, we knew that federalists would propose a federalist option to us. It seems logical to me, although the Charlottetown proposal was not all that clear. When the referendum campaign was launched, we did not have the text. There is no need to recall the incredible series of events before we could obtain those texts; in fact sovereignists themselves had to publish the Charlottetown Accord. This time, the texts are there and clear.

You will recall that sovereignists took part in the debate, first on Meech from 1987 to 1990 and then on Charlottetown in 1992. This was not our option but we played our part as elected representatives. Every day in the House, we present our views on bills we are against even though we know from the start that they will be passed. The government has the majority. We are in the minority, the Official Opposition, but nevertheless we express our disagreement, we try to convince people that the bills do not meet the needs of the population as a whole. This is the essence of democracy. We do not take part in debates only when we agree or when we are sure to win. Otherwise democracy would have no meaning. The democratic way is to take part in

a debate where the majority expresses its views and so does the minority who also has rights and must express its opinion.

They also tell us that there is no parity. But, Mr. Speaker, was there parity in Bélanger–Campeau? There was no parity in that commission, neither among elected representatives, who were mainly federalists because at that time there was a federalist government in Quebec, nor among non-elected people. You only have to look at the results of the votes that took place at the Bélanger–Campeau Commission. The federalists won. Of course, we already knew it would be the case but we used it as an educational campaign. We were not afraid of expressing our ideas.

Was there parity in Meech and Charlottetown? And let us not forget all those committees on Charlottetown: the Spicer Commission, the Beaudoin–Edwards and Beaudoin–Dobbie committees, where there was no parity. Members of the Bloc were not even invited.

An hon. member: You did not even exist back then.

Mr. Duceppe: Yes, we existed. We were here at the time of Spicer, Beaudoin and company, but we were not invited.

At the Charlottetown conference held after Meech, after having stated that he would never be one of eleven, Mr. Bourassa found himself one of seventeen. Is this the idea of federalist parity, one of eleven, or one of seventeen? How high will it go? Is this the parity we are being proposed?

Sovereignists nevertheless took part in the debate on the Meech Lake Accord. In Quebec, from 1987 to 1990, the PQ, which was the Official Opposition, took part in this debate, in the Bélanger–Campeau Commission and in the Charlottetown exercise, always as a minority. Were we, from the Bloc Québécois, given parity in this House? We were eight out of 295 to oppose Charlottetown. We were sitting right by the curtain, in what they called “the lobotomy corner”. It would seem that only those without any brains could see the truth. We debated Charlottetown. We took part in the debate. There was only one option in this: renewed federalism, which is now called flexible federalism. Why not federalism in search of itself while we are at it?

This is the option they give us. But we had another point of view. Need I recall the results of Charlottetown? We were eight out of 295, but it was rejected in Quebec and rejected in Canada, which proves that democracy must prevail over parity. The majority rules, and commissions follow this pattern. Beyond the numbers there are the ideas, and they succeed if they are good. But then, you need to have ideas.

(1030)

The bill is entirely consistent with the law governing referenda in Quebec. Those who argue the contrary should at least be honest enough and serious enough to read that law on referenda

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in Quebec before spreading falsehoods. It would improve the level of the debate. Need we restate that the legislation will not come into force before it is approved in a referendum?

Finally, Quebecers will be called upon to debate the bill before it is put to a vote in the National Assembly. Elected representatives, before they vote, will have to take into consideration the opinion of the people. Now, I am addressing the Reform Party which has been talking about direct democracy for a year in this House. Granted, what the Government of Quebec is doing is not direct democracy, but it is a very interesting consultation process. Yes, we are going to consult Quebecers in all regions before studying the bill in committee, in Quebec City. The bill cannot come into force before a referendum, and even then, another year will pass before sovereignty really takes effect.

It appears to me that this process is very close to democracy. I must say that I do not understand why anyone would be opposed to this process, unless they are afraid to present their ideas to the people.

The process is clear, open and democratic. The decision belongs to Quebecers and nobody else. This is called the right to self-determination, in this case the self-determination of the Quebec nation, a right, need we remind you, recognized by the Conservative Party at its Toronto convention in August 1991, a right recognized by the New Democratic Party as early as the 1960s, and a right recognized especially by the present Prime Minister, who mentioned it in his autobiography. By participating in the 1980 referendum, he recognized in practice the right of Quebecers to decide their own future.

In this regard, I commend the hon. members for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine and for Mount Royal for acknowledging yesterday that the decision would have to be made in Quebec by Quebecers. It is much to their credit that they set themselves apart from the rest of the Liberal caucus.

Indeed, the decision must be made by Quebecers, in Quebec, under the direction of the National Assembly and in accordance with the law governing referenda in Quebec. On this point, the PQ and the QLP, Jacques Parizeau and Daniel Johnson, agree totally. The process is clear.

Why then turn it down? Because federalists have no other option to offer. They cannot even agree among themselves. The former Premier of Quebec, now Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Johnson tells us that status quo is unacceptable. "I will never accept the 1982 Constitution". However, the present Prime Minister considers this Constitution the high point of his career. These people will find themselves under the same umbrella. That is the rub.

As far as the so-called third option presented by the member for Sherbrooke is concerned, well, he would rather not talk about it. That is the rub. They refuse to have a debate. They refuse to crisscross Quebec and have a debate with the citizens of each region. That is the rub.

What is the government proposing? To understand what the Government of Quebec is proposing, we must go back to the Charlottetown Accord. At that time, every party in this House, the Conservatives, the NDP, the Liberals, the Bloc Québécois, as well as the PQ and the Liberals in Quebec agreed on one thing: the political structures in Canada and Quebec are inadequate in view of today's economic challenges. Everybody agreed on that point. That is the reason why Charlottetown came about. Charlottetown was voted down for the reasons we know: Quebec thought it was not enough, the rest of Canada believed it was too much.

(1035)

But the structures have not changed since. Canada is no more prepared than Quebec to face the challenges of the modern economy, no more prepared than they both were in 1992. Nothing has changed, yet Canada has to change and so does Quebec.

That is what Quebec's proposal is about. We suggest having two sovereign countries, sharing a common economic space, as all modern countries do, with full participation in international organizations. This brings to mind GATT and NAFTA. On this subject, let me remind you that had it not been for Quebec, there would have been no free trade agreement, because the rest of Canada was against free trade with the United States. It is Quebec that, to a certain extent, imposed free trade on Canada as a whole in 1988.

This proposal shows respect for Quebec's English-speaking minorities, much more respect than French-speaking minorities are shown across Canada. Before coming and telling us about the dangers of sovereignty, Bob Rae should look after having washrooms installed in Kingston high schools. That is the primary duty of any good government. This proposal recognizes the rights of aboriginal nations. Quebec was the first province to do so, as early as 1985, and this draft bill goes much further than any existing Canadian legislation, but we will come back to this later.

Some say there will be no common economic space. Does this mean that there is no room for negotiation? That is what Bob Rae told us, and he is facing an election in the near future. Did he think about the 100,000 jobs in Ontario that depend on the Quebec market? Did he think about the \$1.8 billion surplus Ontario businesses make in their commercial transactions with Quebec? Is he going to tell them: "Forget about it, my friends. It is gone, a dead loss"? I doubt it. Did he think about the Auto Pact? Will Bob Rae go to Oshawa during his election campaign

and tell the auto workers: "There will be no common economic space. We will not negotiate with Quebec. We will no longer be selling them cars. Let them make their own or buy from Michigan. My friends, we are choosing unemployment out of patriotism"?"

Bob Rae can go ahead and tell them that. We will see what comes of it. He will probably not be around to discuss the issue. But we will see where the debate will lead. I am told that he will not be there. I agree with you for once. At any rate, this is where we stand. We want a dispassionate debate and we urge the government to support this process. The hon. members of this House who are from Quebec in particular are invited to express their views, put forward objections, demonstrate in what way our option is dangerous. That is what they have to do: to discuss the implications.

The Government of Quebec and the sovereignists have never been afraid to discuss. Never, ever have they been afraid of the democratic process. And I will close on this. I hope, with respect to federalism, both in Quebec City and in Ottawa, that this government will now show us that it can and will take on the challenge of democracy.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member and I think he said that one reason he is for separation is that the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords failed. I wonder what the position of the Parti Québécois and the PQ government was on these two accords.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I recalled Meech and Charlotte-town because they are actual facts which show that this system cannot be reformed. The PQ government was against Meech and against Charlottetown, clearly. It said so and we attended many committee hearings and took part in these debates both here and in Quebec City to explain our stand. We were not afraid of it. Besides, we were right and we won. But we were against those accords. It shows one thing, that we won against all the federalists put together. I think that the member of the Reform Party voted with the eight members of the Bloc Québécois then, so maybe we were nine.

(1040)

There were 286 members convinced and captivated by the Charlottetown Accord. We saw the results. This shows the impotence, not because people cannot change things but because these things cannot be changed. There are two realities. Quebec is not better or worse than the rest of Canada, it is simply different, just as Canada is different from the United States. If I asked all hon. members whether Canada should be a sovereign country separate from the United States, they would say yes. Does this mean that they have contempt for the United States because Canada wants to stay sovereign? No, certainly not.

Supply

Neither do we have contempt for Canada. We want to become sovereign for ourselves and have better ties with our Canadian and American friends and all countries in the world.

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my reply will come as no surprise to the opposition member. It is no.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Massé: And let me immediately assure the member that nothing will convince my government to recognize the legitimacy of the process initiated by the PQ government.

The member will agree that many of us have serious problems with the process announced by the PQ government. Let me begin with the leader of the Official Opposition in Quebec City, who aptly labelled it a "misuse of democracy". And for good reason. The Quebec government is asking its citizens to help draw up a constitution for a separate Quebec before they have even had their say on the issue of separation.

I understand why the Premier of Quebec is taking this route. If he asked his fellow citizens the real question, in fact the only legitimate question, "do you want to separate from Canada, yes or no?" the answer would be no. From where he sits, the best approach is to use cunning, and if in the process he flouts democratic principles, so what.

As stated by the member from Sherbrooke, the Premier of Quebec knows his French well. According to the *Petit Robert*, being cunning means acting slyly to deceive someone for the purpose of doing him harm.

The Quebec media have been no kinder in their assessment of the PQ strategy. An editorial in *Le Soleil* was headlined "The anesthetization of a people" and spoke of the "misuse of our parliamentary institutions and the misappropriation of public funds for partisan purposes".

According to *La Presse*, "what is unacceptable is that this bill will be passed by the National Assembly before being put to the people via a referendum. Things are being done in the wrong order". The journalist concluded that we are witnessing a "mockery of democracy".

In today's *Le Journal de Montréal*, Michel Auger pointed out: "Although the majority of Quebecers still wonder why they should become independent, their government says the only thing left to decide is how it should be done". He went on to say: "In fact, it is quite clear that according to their terms of reference, these commissions would be able to consider one option only: the one chosen by the government".

Supply

And in concluding: "Before asking Quebecers to draft the declaration of sovereignty, the government should consider those who have yet to be convinced of the need for sovereignty".

And again in today's *Le Soleil*, Gilbert Lavoie commented: "Although the strategy may seem clever to those who devised it, its weakness is that it underestimates the political savvy of Quebecers which has been borne out on several occasions". He went on to say: "The government's initiative will disappoint Quebecers, because the Pequistes have preferred strategy over substance". And in concluding: "The trap is so obvious that one would have to be very myopic indeed not to see it".

(1045)

Even in *Le Devoir*, under the headline "The stratagem is too obvious", Pierre O'Neill started his article by pointing out that: "Through academic eyes, the consultation process started by Premier Parizeau is viewed with some scepticism. Political scientist Vincent Lemieux feels that the Pequiste initiative lacks legitimacy. 'I think the stratagem is too obvious', commented the Laval University professor yesterday, the man to whom Jean-François Lisée, political adviser to the Premier, referred in 1993 as the Galileo of Quebec politics".

In Wednesday's *La Presse*, Alain Dubuc comments: "This pretence of democracy is disturbing. It excludes, for all practical purposes, those who are opposed to sovereignty and turns these commissions into clubs for friends of the PQ, which may attract the attention of the media for a while, at public expense, and maintain temporary the illusion of almost unanimous support for the yes side. This whole strategy, which the Premier himself referred to as cunning, has its own limitations. Manipulation can backfire. Referendums, both here and elsewhere, have shown that if there is anything citizens cannot abide, it is manipulation by politicians".

Michel David, also in Wednesday's *Le Soleil*, pointed out: "When Mr. Parizeau used the word stratagem two weeks ago, Daniel Johnson immediately concluded it was a scam to fool Quebecers". Mr. David went on to say: "In fact, they pulled a fast one: members of the Premier's staff confided yesterday that the text of the draft bill on sovereignty had been ready since last March. Within the PQ, members had been polled on each section. Each individual section was supported by the majority. In other words, Mr. Parizeau knew well before the election campaign what question he would ask, once he was elected, but he said nothing to the voters. Why, if the case is as clear as he says it is? What about the relationship of trust?"

I could go on for several minutes, quoting people from coast to coast. No one is being taken in by the Quebec Premier's chicanery. Not the media, not the other provincial premiers, not those of us here in Ottawa, not the Quebec Liberal Party and,

unfortunately, to the great dismay of our friends opposite, not the citizens of Quebec.

Mr. Serré: Quebecers are not crazy.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Massé: But it would be more useful to ask ourselves why Quebec's separatist government is so intent on using trickery. The answer is simple. If it played fair and square, if it "put everything on the table", as the Quebec premier has said time and time again, if it went to the people and asked them to decide once and for all, I am convinced that the great majority of Quebecers would opt for Canada.

And this is understandable. Canada is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, countries in the world. Do not take my word for it, just ask the United Nations. I know that certain words are taboo for separatists. Federalism is one. But sooner or later, the connection will have to be made between this political structure and the quality of life we enjoy. For is it pure chance that the four oldest federations in the world—the United States, Switzerland, Australia and Canada—are also among the world's richest countries?

Mr. Duceppe: And the USSR?

Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais: Are we taking about democracy or not?

Mr. Massé: I think, rather, that federalism is better suited than almost any other political structure to the modern challenges facing societies today.

(1050)

We all know that the dual phenomenon of market globalization and the economic revolution shaking the world's industrialized countries requires of each country that it develop to the maximum its potential and its wealth—the things that make it distinct—but also that it be able to act effectively on the international scene, and that is what Canada has done.

We rank seventh among the world's industrialized countries and we enjoy the highest standard of living. Over the past 30 years, we have had the second highest economic growth rate among G-7 countries, behind Japan; among OECD countries, we rank seventh.

Over the past 30 years, we have had the highest rate of job creation among OECD countries and the highest increase in employment per capita. Canada's continued exceptional performance is related to the maintenance and increase of the federal system's effective operations. Federalism permits a central government that efficiently manages activities of international scope—trade, stock markets, environmental protection, international communications.

Not only does this sound international management benefit the members of Confederation, but, within the federal system, economies of scale can also be achieved in implementing

national programs and infrastructure that the constituent members alone could not offer their citizens. Just think of the postal service and the armed forces.

I know that my colleagues on the other side of the house do not share this point of view. For them, Confederation is a dead end, and they want out. But the people of Canada and Quebec instinctively know that, in the new world order, influence on the international scene is important. This influence is directly linked to whether or not you play a role in international forums. You have to be where decisions are made and standards are set. Canada is not a superpower, but it is the world's eighth largest exporter and importer. We are thus doubly entitled to membership in the Group of Seven. No province or regional group could aspire to membership in this forum. I repeat, Mr. Speaker: None. But together, as part of Confederation, they are all members.

Nothing will be said about these benefits of federalism in the consultation that the Government of Quebec wishes to undertake with its friends. Likewise, nothing will be said about the fact that, within Canada, Quebec is part of a Pacific Rim country.

To quote the Prime Minister of Canada, "membership has its privileges". When you consider the dazzling growth of Asian economies, which are very appropriately called the dragons of the East, it is understandable that the separatists do not dare to mention this. The only way they could do so would be to ask Quebecers if they want to give up another benefit of Canada.

It is true that the separatist ministers have already waived these benefits in their surrealistic description of Canada. The Quebec Minister for Restructuring has thus neglected—intentionally or unintentionally—to include the equalization payments that Canada makes to Quebec: \$3.7 billion in 1993 and about \$3.92 billion in 1994–95.

Quebecers' attachment to Canada is not just a matter of benefits and dollars and cents. The people of Quebec built this country. They shaped it and continue to do so. This country is French to the depths of its heart and soul. From sea to sea, French Canadians know that they can deal with their federal government in their own language.

(1055)

Bilingualism is enshrined in this country's very Constitution, which can be amended only with the consent of all legislative assemblies. This, in effect, gives Quebec's National Assembly a veto. In the same way, the Canadian Constitution guarantees Quebec three of the nine judgeships on the Supreme Court. No other province has such guarantees. When you consider the increasing impact of this court's decisions, you realize that the

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soul of Quebec will continue to influence and define Canada as a country for a long time to come.

I confess that listening to the current Premier of Quebec makes me smile sometimes. Not often, but sometimes.

I could not help noting how he went about demonstrating Quebec's know-how in his speeches to the Chamber of Commerce of Montreal and the Canadian Club in Toronto, and even his address this week. No one has ever doubted this know-how. But when I hear him mention Céline Dion, Denys Arcand, the Cirque du Soleil, Bombardier, Lavalin and a host of others, I cannot help telling myself that all of them have succeeded within Canada, some of them with direct or indirect assistance from the federal government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Massé: Mr. Speaker, the ancestors of the people of Quebec were among the first Europeans to set foot on Canadian soil. They built this country with their daring, ingenuity and courage, and not even a premier will hoodwink them into throwing in the towel and pulling out of Canada. The men and women of Quebec received this country as their heritage and want to pass it on to their children.

The motion before the House is contrary to Canada's historical roots. It would have us, the people of Quebec, forget our origins and our ancestors, and disregard 127 years of shared history which have resulted in raising us to the rank of one of the best countries in the world.

I will thus vote against this motion out of respect for history, and out of duty to my children and to democracy.

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have some comments to make in response to the speech by the hon. member opposite.

He harshly criticized the Quebec government's draft bill, which he has a right to do. However, his very federalist and quite ordinary speech, except for the first part in which he used the word "astuce" in French, only referred to the status quo, something which we have been hearing here in this House for some 20 years and which Quebecers are sick and tired of listening to.

We looked up the definition of the word "astuce", because it may be the only interesting point that you raised at the beginning of your speech. Forgive me, Mr. Speaker, I should address my comments to you.

The word "astuce" in old French means this:

Ability to deceive others in order to harm them or get something out of them.

I agree. Rather than the old French definition, the hon. member opposite should use the modern-day definition, which is "ingeniousness and inventiveness".

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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Mr. Deshaies: Mr. Speaker, the opposite of astute is crude and unintelligent.

I would like us to use current terminology to describe Quebecers as ingenious and inventive.

(1100)

As the hon. member opposite pointed out, Quebecers have shown inventiveness through companies like Bombardier, artists like Céline Dion, etc. Yes, Quebec wants to chart its future, and Quebec's draft bill is a way to do this.

To return to the old definition of "astuce", the federal government may not be in a position to teach Quebec anything. In 1982, when the Constitution was patriated unilaterally, the federal government deceived René Lévesque during the night of the long knives. Was it a federalist scam? We should really talk about it.

One fact cannot be denied. Quebec citizens sent a 54-member majority to the House of Commons, and they knew about our allegiance. My hon. colleague would surely like to tell me that all those who voted for the Bloc Québécois may not have been sovereignists, sovereignists and separatists.

Mr. Serré: Separatists.

Mr. Deshaies: Sovereignists or separatists, whatever. If you want to use the old terminology, that is your choice.

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I am getting carried away.

The people who voted for the Bloc Québécois were also fed up with the current federal system, because of mismanagement by the central government. According to a poll, 66 per cent of Quebecers reject the status quo or the current federal system. The hon. members opposite might reply that federal Liberals offer flexible federalism. Allow me to question this flexibility, when Quebec and several other provinces are still waiting for this flexibility, promised in every election, after 10 years under Tory governments and the 10 years before that under the Trudeau government and others.

What is important to me and to all the people in the riding of Abitibi, who ask me when they will receive information on the sovereignty plan, is that the draft bill is a way to receive this information. People want to know more about the grounds on which their decision will be based.

I have a question for the hon. member opposite: What about the need to address Quebecers' needs, to give them information, and not just federalist rhetoric? Why should they stay in the federalist system, why?

Mr. Massé: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. member opposite questions the use of words. I thought that I had read enough editorials written by contemporary French Canadians from Quebec. They are experts in using the pen and the dictionary. They were not caught up in words. They saw the ruse

behind the lack of democracy and called it secretive and a show of democracy. Public opinion in Quebec is clearly that Mr. Parizeau's proposal is not democratic; whether it is called sneaky, a sham or secretive, it is still unacceptable.

Second, speaking of federalism and flexible federalism, our country has evolved over 127 years with relatively few changes to the Constitution, but with tremendous changes affecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and the federal government and with continuous adjustments to a changing economic, political and social environment. We can continue to evolve within the present Constitution and we do continue to evolve, making very considerable changes that affect jurisdiction, the way the country is governed and our social programs, provided that we know how to act as partners.

That is true federalism. History shows us that it has worked and provided solutions and given Canada the highest standard of living in the world.

(1105)

This did not happen by accident or despite the federal system, on the contrary. The reason Canada, including Quebec, is one of the best countries in the world, maybe the best, is its federal structure, which year after year has proven to be good for Canadians, good for Quebecers and adaptable to change. It will help us adjust to the economic, political and social changes now going on in the outside world.

Third, although there are 54 Bloc Québécois members in this House, let us not forget that we, Liberals, form a government which is perceived across the country as an efficient and honest government. This is evidenced by the fact that, for the last three months, public support in the polls has been maintained at an all-time high of 63 per cent for any government in the 54 years that such polls have been conducted.

In Quebec, while our leader enjoyed relatively low support, somewhere around 20 per cent, during the election campaign, that support has climbed up to 47 per cent in recent weeks, the same as for Lucien Bouchard. This means that Quebecers themselves have a favourable opinion of the way the federal government is working on their behalf.

As for mandate, it is clear that Mr. Parizeau, and he said so himself dozens of times during the election campaign, was not elected with a mandate to achieve sovereignty: He was elected to provide a new government and, really, to create jobs, just like us. The fact that Mr. Parizeau's party received 44 per cent of the popular vote is tantamount to a rejection of sovereignty. It is totally undemocratic to table a draft bill which takes for granted that sovereignty has already been accepted as a goal by Quebecers, since the facts show that the contrary is true.

By introducing its draft bill, the Parizeau government is trying to fool Quebecers; it is using a ploy which is both a scam and an undemocratic measure. This is a view shared by us, by

our government and by the majority of Quebecers and Quebec editorialists. I am convinced that when the time comes for Quebecers to choose between separation and flexible federalism, they will opt for the latter.

In conclusion, the motion tabled by the opposition clearly does not respect the democratic spirit of Canadians, including Quebecers, and it must be rejected.

The Speaker: There are approximately 60 seconds left in the debate, or 30 seconds for each side. The hon. member for Chambly.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the hon. minister explain in what respect the Charlottetown process was more democratic than the one proposed by the Quebec government? In the Charlottetown process, I remember that we were even asked to vote on unwritten agreements, and, in the third round of the 1992 referendum, when the government realized that the house was on fire, they had to hurriedly write up the infamous Charlottetown accord, where they asked Canadians, and Quebecers in particular, to vote on something which did not even exist in concrete terms.

We kept hearing: "Trust us, because we know, we feel, and we tell you what is right", but nothing was written up. In what respect was that process more democratic than the present one? I would appreciate an answer from the minister.

(1110)

Mr. Massé: Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House attempts to determine, rather it states the Bloc Québécois's position on democracy, based on what Mr. Parizeau did. In fact, what he did is clearly undemocratic because his bill takes for granted an answer to a question which was never asked, and because this regional commission procedure is really a joke, as it recreates fifteen yes committees. That is the unanimous view of Quebecers and that is clearly why these are undemocratic proposals.

[English]

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Bloc motion that the House enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec in order to allow Quebecers to chart their own political and constitutional future.

The motion raises two essential questions which I would like to deal with one at a time. The first question is: What is the so-called democratic process initiated by the Quebec government? According to the draft bill tabled by Mr. Parizeau in the Quebec assembly, the process consists of the following.

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First, the publication of a draft bill, a bill which is clearly illegal in terms of the Canadian Constitution, followed by additional steps designed to legitimate this illegal act;

Second, a period of information and participation for the purposes of approving this illegal bill and drafting a declaration of sovereignty which will form part of its preamble;

Third, discussion of this illegal bill respecting the sovereignty of Quebec and its passage by the National Assembly; and

Fourth, approval of this illegal act by the population in a referendum.

In other words, what we have here is a process designed to attempt to give democratic legitimacy to an illegal act of the Quebec assembly. So far we note that the federal government has been extremely reluctant to point out the illegality of what is proposed. I was hoping the minister might do that today. I am convinced that if some other province such as the province of Alberta were today to table an act in its legislature completely out of its own jurisdiction such as, say, alternative gun control legislation and attempted to legitimate it by a process such as this, it would not take the federal government 30 seconds to make clear the illegality and unacceptability of what was being proposed.

I suggest that even within Quebec if a portion of that community, say the Mohawk Nation through its elected council, were to table such a bill and attempt to legitimate it by such a process, the Quebec government would be the first to declare such an act and such a process illegal and illegitimate.

The second question is the bigger question: What are the generally accepted tests of democratic legitimacy and how does the so-called democratic process initiated by the Quebec government stand up to those tests? The first test is the rule of law.

In free countries democratic legitimacy refers to the general acceptability of a process in the political community. A process is considered legitimate if it is supported by the constitution of a political community, in other words whether or not it conforms to the rule of law. In Canada this means that all proceedings relating to constitutional change, even an attempted secession, must take place within the rules established by the Constitution of Canada. That means that constitutional change of any kind should take place by the means of a formal amendment to the Canadian Constitution. Acts which are clearly unconstitutional are also clearly illegitimate.

In this case, virtually every clause of the act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec is clearly unconstitutional, notably the declaration of sovereignty in section 1, the undefined rules of constitution making in section 3, the territorial provisions in section 4, the citizenship rules in section 5, the treaty rights assumed in section 7, the alliance rights assumed in section 8, the assumption of the ability to overrule federal laws by the

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provincial assembly claimed in section 10, the removal of the authority of the Supreme Court of Canada in section 12, and the assumption of the right to make appointments to federal bodies in section 13.

Each of these sections is therefore illegitimate, as is the act as a whole.

(1115)

If the Government of Quebec wishes to proceed with constitutional changes, including one as drastic as secession, there is a way to do so. That is through a formal amendment to the Canadian Constitution. The Government of Quebec has not chosen that route. Both the route it has chosen and the process it employs do not meet the test of the rule of law.

The second test is direct questions on real options. To be legitimate direct democracy must ask direct questions. The question posed in the act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec is indirect and misleading. It does not ask the straight simple question: Should Quebec secede from Canada, yes or no? Instead it asks: Are you in favour of the act passed by the National Assembly declaring the sovereignty of Quebec? The key provisions of the act however do not go into force until after the referendum is approved.

Section 16 of the act states that section 2, to negotiate an economic association with Canada, section 3, to write a constitution for Quebec, and section 15, to negotiate a division of the assets and debts of Canada, do not go into effect until after it is too late for the voters to change their minds. This is clearly illegitimate from the standpoint of direct democracy. It is even illegitimate compared to Levesque's 1980 question which promised to provide a completed package which would then be submitted to voters for their further approval at a second referendum.

The draft act itself which is at the heart of the process is also filled with misconceptions and misrepresentations. There is the misconception that an economic association with Canada will automatically be attained and agreed to by Canada. There is the assumption that Quebec will retain the boundaries it has within the Canadian Confederation at the time the act comes into force. There is the assumption of dual citizenship which is entirely beyond the capacity of even a sovereign Quebec to grant and the assumption that Quebec shall assume the obligations and enjoy the rights arising out of treaties to which Canada is a part. All of these are misconceptions and misrepresentations which cannot be legitimately promised by any Quebec government, sovereign or not.

The draft bill is a hollow shell with the content to be provided only after the shell has been approved by the public. To use a more down to earth metaphor, the draft bill is a blank cheque

which the Government of Quebec seeks to induce the Quebec electorate to sign.

For a process that claims to be democratic, to be legitimate it must also provide opportunity for all the options which might potentially gain majority support, including those that are repugnant to the proponents and managers of the process to be considered. Yet clearly all options for reform within federalism are precluded under the act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec. Only within the constitution of a sovereign Quebec will reforms be considered so everybody, including those who oppose secession, are forced to participate in the process of writing a declaration of independence even if they are not in favour of independence.

The referendum process itself, including the Quebec referendum law, does not provide for adequate consideration of all the options. In particular Quebecers will only be presented with a choice between status quo federalism and sovereignty. The principal alternative option, namely a complete rebuilding of the federal system from the bottom up, is not assured even a fair hearing let alone consideration.

The third test is of democratic legitimacy, inclusiveness and non-coercion. Democracy must be inclusive allowing all who are affected to vote, but the interests of the people in the rest of Canada in whether or not their country will be torn asunder are not even acknowledged. What is legitimate about declaring arbitrarily that democratic self-determination is the exclusive right of the people of Quebec constituted as a single arbitrarily defined collectivity?

The process defined in the draft bill in no way shape or form acknowledges that the people of Canada also have a right to choose their national future. Nor does it deal adequately with the democratic rights of the people of any region of Quebec, many of whom might choose to secede from Quebec and remain a part of Canada.

In addition to all this, the process proposed by the draft bill is essentially coercive. As I said, all options for reform within federalism are precluded under the act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec. Only within the constitution of a sovereign Quebec will reforms be considered.

(1120)

Even groups that have no interest in broader constitutional questions will be forced to participate in the process of developing an act of secession for fear that if they do not their interests will be left out of the Quebec constitution. As each new group joins in, all those who are left out will feel increasing pressure to join in, thus driving the process toward the inevitable conclusion of separation. This is not democratic consent at all but forced consent which is a charade of democracy.

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All the polls to date indicate that a majority of Quebecers do not want to secede from Canada if given a clear choice on that question. The separatist Government of Quebec obviously does not accept that opinion. It has put together a process designed not to give fair and legitimate recognition to majority opinion but to create majority support for a minority opinion.

In conclusion, the bottom line is that the process as proposed by the Quebec government and supported by the Bloc does not meet the great tests of democratic legitimacy. It is not in accordance with the rule of law. It does not ask direct questions on real options. It is not inclusive and it is coercive.

Obviously therefore the process should be rejected by all democrats in Canada whether in Quebec or outside it and regardless of their constitutional opinions and preferences. Obviously the House should defeat the motion.

The proposed bill and processes are also extremely revealing with respect to the character of the current Government of Quebec. All democratic governments, including the Government of Quebec, should be held accountable to respect the rule of law and the basic criteria of free democratic processes. If a government does not respect those processes and uses illegitimate processes to induce its own population to support illegal acts, how can any member of that society be assured that such a government will not do the same thing again at some future date, disregarding both the rule of law again and using illegitimate processes again, this time to manipulate its own people against their will?

The federal government as the government with responsibility for the peace, order, good government and economic well-being of all Canadians has a responsibility to make clear the illegality and illegitimacy of what the Government of Quebec proposes. The federal government has a responsibility as a bare minimum to refute the misconceptions concerning economic association, sovereignty association and dual citizenship which are at the heart of the Quebec government's bill and process. We assume that the federal government will be discharging these responsibilities in the course of this debate and in the days ahead.

The federal cabinet ministers make frequent reference to wanting to avoid playing Parizeau's game, but Parizeau's game is to take initiatives, including illegal initiatives, and assume that the federal government will do nothing but fume and sputter. It is time for the federal government to stop playing Parizeau's game and begin discharging its responsibilities for preserving the peace, order, good government and economic well-being of Canada and all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to emphasize the following point: federalists

seem to have been caught unawares and to be panic-stricken. They use everything, every false statement they can think of, to try to show that the process initiated by Quebecers does not meet their standards.

The leader of the Reform Party started by saying that he thinks that the Quebec government's draft bill is illegal. I am sure that the Premier of Quebec had everything checked out before initiating this process. In fact, we are confident that the bill is in accordance with Quebec's Referendum Act.

Second, federalists have been talking all morning about democracy. This has me very puzzled. Federalists are now trying everything to convince Quebecers, especially federalists, not to take part in this process. If democracy is being abused, it is by the federalists who are trying very hard to ensure that Quebec federalists do not take part in this democratic experience.

(1125)

If we were dealing with an extremely complex draft bill, comprised of hundreds of clauses that the average citizen would have a hard time understanding, they might have good reasons to be concerned. But the draft bill is made up of just 16 very straightforward clauses that only set out the definition of sovereignty that is generally accepted in Quebec. So, this definition does not take anyone by surprise, except the federalists who still think that they can convince Quebecers by making empty speeches on the beauty and the sheer size of Canada.

For the last 50 years, Quebecers have been trying slowly but surely to show that they do not feel at ease within the Canadian federation. They have been expressing their feelings in a very special and original way, by creating brand new political parties that can be found nowhere else but in Quebec. Here are a few of those parties: the Action libérale nationale, the Union nationale, the Bloc populaire, the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale, the Rassemblement national, the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois. Why have Quebecers felt, for the last 50 years, the need to have their own tools to promote Quebec's interests? Obviously because the big parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, federalists by definition, have never been able to get in touch with the soul of Quebec. So do not talk to us about democracy!

Federalists also seem to have forgotten some important historical events. I would like to remind them that 14 countries were present at the Madrid Conference in 1880. In 1920, 47 countries were represented at the very first general assembly of the League of Nations. In 1945, representatives of 50 countries witnessed the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, in San Francisco. In 1990, there were 175 countries and it is estimated that in 5 or 10 years, the number of countries will reach 200. This goes to show that nations have understood that sovereignty helps to correct inequities. By becoming sovereign,

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smaller nations reach the same level as bigger countries. This is essentially what Quebec wants.

In conclusion, I would like to put a question to the leader of the Reform Party: Does he think that the people of Quebec are a nation?

[English]

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, the short answer to the latter question is that I believe Quebecers are a distinct people. I do not believe that automatically conveys a right to establish an independent state by illegal means. I will answer some of the other points the member raised in the order he raised them.

We do not shy away from the legitimate use of the democratic process to settle the most profound questions, including the question of secession. We believe those processes should be in accordance with the rule of law, they should ask real questions about the real issue and they should present all the options.

The option we are most concerned about in Quebec that is not being considered, and maybe we are having difficulty communicating it to our Bloc friends, is that there is a legitimate third option. It is not the hon. member for Sherbrooke's third option.

All across the country there are people who want to rebuild federalism from the bottom up in a much more profound way. Meech Lake and Charlottetown were top down. That is what was wrong with them and that is why we rejected them.

All across the country there are people who want to rebuild the federal system from the bottom up. We believe that the process which has been suggested here and the process which has been followed in Quebec for the last 30 years have not given that option a legitimate opportunity for expression, nor does the process outlined in this act.

(1130)

There are two more points arising from the member's comments. He suggested that sovereignty is a legitimate and principal means of dealing with inequality. I question him. Does the member actually believe that the way to deal, for example, with inequalities within Quebec is that if someone feels unequal the way to cope with that is to declare themselves sovereign and independent from the framework in which they feel the inequality?

That principle can be preached here in defence of Quebec's attempts to secede. I doubt very much whether any of the members would agree to it if it was put forward by someone in Quebec as an argument for addressing their inequality and seceding from Quebec.

My last point is on the question of legality. I would challenge the Bloc members to table in the House a legal opinion from any respected constitutional authority saying that the bill that has

been tabled in the Quebec legislature is within the legislative competence of the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Madam Speaker, my comments are not necessarily for the Reform Party or the Liberal Party. My comments are aimed specifically at all Canadian federalists.

We are being accused of proposing an undemocratic process to Quebecers. Contrary to what we are used to on the Canadian political scene, this is an exciting project in democracy, since not only will Quebecers not have something forced on them by elected representatives in their ivory tower but they are all invited by Mr. Parizeau to take part in the process. And this is what democracy is all about.

So it is totally wrong to pretend that the process initiated by the Parti Québécois is undemocratic. On the contrary, the proposed process could not be more democratic, since all Quebecers, federalists, liberals or conservatives or whatever will be able to get involved. This project is 100 per cent democratic, since all Quebecers will have their say.

I see that my time is running out. I will come back to this later today because I absolutely want to give further insights into the federal government's sharp dealings with Quebec in the last 40 years or so.

In response to my question, I would like the leader of the Reform Party to tell us what democracy is to him. Is it a decision made by a prime minister or is it a decision coming from the grass roots?

[English]

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I thought I made myself clear as to what I consider democracy to be. The heart of it is the consent of the governed and democratic processes have to meet certain basic fundamental tests no matter where we talk about democracy in the world.

Those tests are as follows. They must conform to the rule of law. Second, they must ask real questions about the real issue, not indirect questions. Third, they must present all options and allow equal opportunity for all options. Fourth, the processes must result in getting the consent of the governed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond—Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Madam Speaker, before beginning my speech, I would like to advise you that from now on, members of the Official Opposition will make 10-minute speeches.

When I hear the big guns of federalism call undemocratic the process to consult the people announced by the Premier of Quebec, Jacques Parizeau, on December 6, when he presented the draft bill on Quebec sovereignty, I seriously worry about the

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political maturity of the federal Liberals and the Official Opposition in the Quebec National Assembly.

(1135)

I have the rather startling impression of being in front of a class of teenagers who refuse to grow up. Let me explain. Any psychologist can tell you that magical thinking is one characteristic of adolescence. A classical example is a teen-age girl who knows the facts of life but is convinced that she cannot become pregnant because that happens only to others. I am sure that all hon. members could put a face or a name to the young girl in my example. Everybody knows perfectly well that magical thinking cannot prevent the oldest reproductive technique in the world from working efficiently. The number of unwanted pregnancies among teenagers proves it beyond question.

No, Madam Speaker, magical thinking does not make it so, no matter what the Deputy Prime Minister and the premiers of Ontario and New Brunswick, all long-time allies of Quebec, may think. The announced process is highly democratic.

It is unreasonable to claim that the draft bill presented by Mr. Parizeau is unfounded, undemocratic or a fraud or that the Quebec government is trying to win the referendum by deceiving people, because those incisive comments and others like them will never be powerful enough filters to make something democratic, undemocratic.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke used *Le Petit Robert* to give us a definition of the word "astuce". Everybody was impressed by his "cleverness". Since he is an experienced and I might even say a clever politician, I thought I could do the same thing and look up the word "democracy" in the dictionary. Here is what I found:

Political doctrine according to which sovereignty must belong to the people.

My world goes beyond the dictionary. Patrick Watson, a renowned journalist who was even chairman of the CBC, wrote: "Democracy consists of verbal exchanges. It favours discussion over force, deliberations over mood swings, good reasons over powerful weapons, consensus over conflict, peace over war, co-operation over competition".

It seems that supporters of the status quo or, if you prefer, supporters of "flexible" federalism, have chosen force, mood swings, powerful weapons, conflict, war and competition. What is sad for democracy is to see that democratically elected men and women have rejected discussion, deliberations, good reasons, consensus, peace and co-operation.

The draft bill on Quebec's sovereignty contains 17 clauses. Clause 10 stipulates that existing federal laws that apply in Quebec shall remain in force until amended or repealed by the National Assembly. Is it undemocratic to ask the approval of

Quebecers to have, in a sovereign Quebec, laws that meet their needs?

Is it undemocratic to ask them if they are sick and tired of all these endless jurisdictional quarrels over health, education, income security programs, manpower training and social security? The process that the Government of Quebec has launched is very democratic. In the end, the people's sanction will replace the royal sanction. This process is certainly as democratic as the federal government's consultation process on social reform.

The objective pursued by this government of cutting social programs at the expense of the unemployed, welfare recipients, women and students in order to contain a huge deficit, is simply not acceptable to the people of Quebec. The debate proposed by the Quebec government will give them an opportunity to say so once again.

(1140)

Instead of creating jobs, the federal government chooses to cut left and right. The federal government is unable to make the proper diagnosis; it does not deserve the confidence of the people of Quebec since it is unable to administer the appropriate medicine.

In the area of education, the federal government is innovating by proposing to reduce the federal contribution to post-secondary educational institutions, and by way of compensation it is encouraging our young people to go into debt. There is no question of giving Quebec full jurisdiction for occupational training despite the clearly established labour-management consensus on that. Since the federal government runs the unemployment insurance program, it makes the decisions on manpower training programs. Never mind the inefficiency, the red tape and the waste of taxpayers' money!

The proposed social security reform, especially as regards the Canada assistance plan and child tax benefits, is equally unacceptable for Quebec because it maintains, indeed even increases, federal encroachment on Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. Quebec will never accept being subject to national standards—not today, no more than yesterday and certainly not tomorrow.

Is it unreasonable to ask the people of Quebec whether they believe that the Quebec government is able to take on all the responsibilities in these areas of jurisdiction and to make its own laws in these areas?

It would be unreasonable and undemocratic not to listen to what the people of Quebec have to say on that subject. Clause 10 of the draft bill on Quebec sovereignty will give them an opportunity to express themselves democratically.

Supply

Clause 11 clarifies a particularly sensitive point. Many of us remember the horror stories told to our senior citizens by the federalist werewolves in 1980, that if they voted yes they would lose their pensions.

Today, nobody would buy these statements made in bad faith. Since bad faith is hard to eradicate, the government wisely saw fit to specify as follows: "Pensions and supplements payable to the elderly shall continue to be paid by the Government according to the same terms and conditions".

I am almost tempted to say that I would not be surprised if Quebecers considered that clause useless, because in 1994 fear is completely out of the picture. Democracy also means being free from fear.

Quebec is a distinct society, and for a long time democracy in Quebec has been just as healthy as it is in any other jurisdiction. Quebecers know it, and they are rightly proud of it.

I will conclude by quoting Patrick Watson: "Through referendums, citizens do much more than choose their representatives; they govern themselves. But, if the referendum process does not include a civic education program or public education meetings, rich and influential people will use it to manipulate voters".

The process outlined in the draft bill on Quebec sovereignty puts the issues on the table and lets all citizens discuss them. I regret that federalists in Quebec will not participate, but I am sure Quebecers will get a better understanding of what democracy means, because their sensible, thoughtful and enthusiastic participation will prevent "rich and influential people" from manipulating voters, because the process set out by the Quebec government will let them govern directly.

(1145)

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette—Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the speeches made up to now. As far as I can see, there is not much consistency in the speeches made by members of the Bloc today.

Earlier this morning, we heard a member of the Bloc Quebecois inform us that it is because of Quebec that NAFTA was signed. However, we all know very well, and it is quite clear for me as a member from New Brunswick, that the government of Quebec has been reluctant in recent decades to liberalize trade between the Canadian provinces.

How can they say, on the one hand, that they support free trade with the United States and Mexico and, on the other hand, that they are extremely reluctant to liberalize interprovincial trade?

The member said earlier that Quebecers will have a clear and definite choice. In the process which has started, where is this clear and definite choice? There is none because the working paper presents only one option to Quebecers. Where is the overall plan Mr. Parizeau promised the people of Quebec? Where is this overall plan? Maybe we will keep the Canadian

dollar. Maybe we will have Canadian passports. This plan is full of maybes. It is not with such proposals that Quebecers can make an enlightened choice. We cannot make an enlightened choice on the basis on uncertainties.

This is duplicity. I remember reading, and I read a lot, all the history books about Quebec when Quebecers stood up and opposed the dark age of Duplessis. I am also convinced that they will say no to the undemocratic dark age of Parizeau.

My question is as follows: Since the suggested process accepts only the separatist position, how will it inform the supporters of independence of the risks which will threaten them for generations? I am not asking this question and making these comments in a partisan way. I am making them because of the strong roots I have in Quebec and because I am concerned about the present and future well-being of Quebecers.

Mrs. Dalphond—Guiral: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the government member for her comments. I must admit I did not understand when she said right out that Bloc members' statements were inconsistent.

I failed to understand because in fact there were two speeches and some comments. Obviously no one will support the undemocratic philosophy advocated by our political opponents. Why not admit that NAFTA came about largely because of all the efforts made by Quebecers? I am thinking here particularly about the present Quebec Minister of International Affairs, Bernard Landry, who insisted so much on the necessity of free trade for Canada and of course for Quebec.

(1150)

In response to the question raised by my hon. colleague who is wondering how in God's name we will make Quebecers aware of all the incredible risks that lie ahead for them, I say this: The best way to inform Quebecers about these so-called risks—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to be brief.

Mrs. Dalphond—Guiral: May I go on? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

How can Quebecers be informed about these so-called risks if people will not sit at a table and take part in the consultations which will be held by the provincial government? The debate is open.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, today, as a member of the Bloc Quebecois and as a member of Parliament representing Quebec, I am proud to answer the call of the Premier of Quebec.

The Premier of Quebec has asked us to mobilize our resources, organize consultation meetings and prepare for the Quebec of the future. Today, I would like to focus on two specific points in order to deal with the questions that people are

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asking, including the questions asked by the hon. member of the Liberal Party who spoke just now.

What does the draft bill have to say about currency and the apportionment of debt or, as it says in the bill, apportionment of property and debts? I will start with the first item: currency. What criteria will be applied to determine the currency to be used in a sovereign Quebec?

Sovereignists were part of the Bélanger–Campeau Commission, although it was organized by a party in power that, as we have seen throughout, was clearly of the federalist persuasion. The commission did a number of studies, and the two points I want to discuss with you, currency and apportionment of property and debts, were examined in–depth by the Bélanger–Campeau Commission, a commission that enjoyed considerable recognition and credibility in Quebec and was accepted by the entire population.

This commission listed the criteria to be considered, and I will mention the five principal criteria: economic interdependence, minimizing uncertainty, maintaining the same economic space, the stability of a dollar that is broader based, and trade with other countries that do not use the same currency. All these criteria lead us to conclude that it would be better for Quebec and Canada if we used Canadian currency in Quebec.

The hon. member who pointed out that the bill was not clear may wish to listen to section 6, which refers to currency. The draft bill says: “The legal currency of Quebec shall continue to be the Canadian dollar”.

A large number of Quebec’s exports go to Canada. Many businesses in Quebec and Ontario or elsewhere in Canada, in New Brunswick and the west, that export their products would be better off if we had the same dollar, which would simplify transactions and avoid the additional cost of using a different currency. This would prevent much of the uncertainty that would otherwise be caused by Canada’s currency being more narrowly based and the use of a new currency in Quebec.

Therefore both parties would benefit from having the same currency. It would greatly facilitate negotiations on the sharing of assets and the debt if the debt were calculated in the same currency. Therefore a monetary union is clearly desirable.

However, the Quebec Premier said that he wishes to hear the opinion of Quebecers on that matter. Being from a border area I hope and I am convinced that people in my riding and region will express their views on the currency they wish to use in a sovereign Quebec. Many of them will certainly prefer to keep the Canadian currency.

I can see my federalist friends jotting things down and preparing to say: “What guarantee do you have that you will be able to keep the Canadian currency?” Nothing prevents Quebec from doing so. I can hardly imagine the Prime Minister asking

the Bank of Canada to print on bank notes: “This note is legal tender everywhere in the world except in Quebec”. How would that look? How would it be interpreted? How would he explain to businesses that from now on it will cost more to do business? Because for many people doing business in Quebec is profitable. They do not do it for charitable reasons but because it is profitable. How will he explain to Canadian businesses who export to Quebec that he is adding to their costs on a mere political whim?

Madam Speaker, it cannot go that way, good sense will prevail.

That would considerably alleviate uncertainty while facilitating agreements between Quebec and Canada in areas where they share common interests. Instead of looking for differences, we would be looking for common points.

If there is uncertainty, it is not about the decision that Quebecers will make. If there is any uncertainty, it is in the way Canadians will react to the answer Quebecers will give through a democratic process. The uncertainty lies in the response Canadians would give if Quebecers chose to become masters of their own destiny.

(1155)

I also want to say a few words about how the assets and liabilities would be shared. I will not mention the legal aspects of the issue, which would clearly favour Quebec; things are very clear concerning assets, much less so concerning financial commitments to creditors. In any case, out of respect and concern for commitments made in the past, the draft bill states: “The Government may conclude, with the Government of Canada, any agreement relating to the apportionment of the property and debts of Canada, and to any matter susceptible of facilitating the application of this Act”.

Out of respect for commitments made in the past, Quebec can and must agree with Canada on the apportionment of assets and liabilities. Many people mention the apportionment of the debt, but there are also properties on Quebec territory. These will become the property of the Quebec government. Quebec’s share of the assets and debts will have to be established. Again in this case, the findings of Bélanger–Campeau will be used as a basis for negotiations, even as a very firm negotiating position since this is a serious study.

I remind you that we already pay for the national debt. Some people ask how we are going to pay for that debt, as if Quebecers did not already pay their share of that debt! Each year, we pay \$30 billion in taxes to help finance programs and pay interest on the debt and the government continues to borrow on our behalf. Now, Quebec would only be responsible for a share of the debt and the interest that is still to be defined, which is normal. I will come back to this. But we already pay for that. People realize

Supply

this will not be an additional burden. On the contrary, Quebecers might have to pay less, as we will explain to them.

Using a method based on an evaluation of the assets found in Quebec—and there are various methods to calculate our share—the Bélanger–Campeau Commission came to the conclusion that our share of the debt was 18.5 per cent of the total.

Since our share of the Canadian economy, of the gross domestic product, is a little over 23 per cent, this means that our share of the debt would be even lower than before in relation to the GDP. This is an interesting factor for Quebecers. Moreover, Quebec would have total control over its fiscal policy. We would be able to invest in the more productive sectors, stop receiving welfare and focus on the more productive sectors. This is a very interesting aspect for Quebec's future.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to remind you briefly of the events that led us to the decision the Premier of Quebec made today.

Let us look only at the last four years. On June 22, 1990, the Meech Lake Accord failed. On June 20, 1991, the Bélanger–Campeau Commission was established to examine the possibility and consequences of Quebec's sovereignty. On October 26, 1992, the Charlottetown Accord was rejected. On October 25, 1993, 54 sovereignists were elected to the Parliament of Canada. On September 12, 1994, 77 members of a sovereignist party were elected to form the government of Quebec. On December 7, the Premier of Quebec tabled a draft bill asking the people to define what would be in the preamble to Quebec's Constitution, to define their commitment to Quebec, to define the values they cherish right now and the values they want for the future. This draft bill asks the people to help in shaping the Quebec of tomorrow.

As a young Quebecer, I must tell you that participating in shaping of the Quebec of the future is the finest challenge that my generation has been issued, and it is with pride and dedication that the members of the Bloc Québécois will accept this challenge. Our answer to the Premier of Quebec is: Bravo! At last we see the light at the end of the tunnel. We support your process and we will build the Quebec of tomorrow.

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased with what the Bloc member who just spoke said about economic integration in particular, because of what it means for the people of Quebec and Ontario.

(1200)

I represent an Ontario riding. We Ontarians realize that our future and our economy are closely tied to Quebec. Quebec is our best market, our number one economic partner. So, it is only normal that the party opposite talk about the connection between

Ontario and Quebec, about the close economic ties that will always exist between us.

The question is: how will we plan our future together? We see it as part of a federal system. You are considering keeping the Canadian dollar as legal currency. I ask you: what is the point of continuing to use the Canadian currency in an independent Quebec? If that is what you want, so be it. At present, in this House, you have a Prime Minister from Quebec and the Minister of Finance, also from Quebec, ensuring that you have some control over this currency. If tomorrow, from an Ontario point of view, you will have an independent Quebec, why are you planning to keep the Canadian currency? It may be a good idea, but then, it must be made quite clear to the people of Quebec that the rest of Canada will insist on controlling its own currency, while Quebec, if an arrangement is negotiated, will hold only 25 per cent of the voting power under a possible arrangement on a common currency.

Today, you have some control over this currency. Tomorrow, you will only have an interest, with the rest of Canada, with the others, and yours will be a minority interest. So, when you say that what you do in Quebec will be determined democratically, bear in mind that whatever you do affects the rights and interests of other Canadians who, like me as an Ontarian, have respect for Quebecers and have this to say to them: "Yes to democracy. Yes, Quebecers have the right to decide their future democratically, as long as this is done with full knowledge of what is at stake".

Let us not lose sight of the facts amid this pile of hypotheses, hypotheses that are not at all correct and that you have selected. If you are really democratic, include us in the process, so that the people of Quebec can see, so that they have a chance to see whether these hypotheses are realistic or not. That is the problem with your process. That is why your process is not democratic.

I will conclude with a word on an entirely different matter, which nonetheless is related to the democratic process. In Ontario, we have a strong French-speaking minority which has been campaigning for many years for its survival. Bear in mind also, in your democracy, when you make your choices, what will become of the French language in Ontario.

Mr. Brien: Madam Speaker, I will respond to some of the points raised by the hon. member, whom I wish to thank because he seems to be interested in participating in the consultations and to have a constructive point of view. I urge him to participate in the consultations. He should put pressure on the members of his party and express his fears about the currency so that we can arrive at an even wiser decision.

It would be interesting if he got involved in a great democratic process instead of boycotting it. Just a short word on the French-speaking minority in Ontario. I hope that, as an Ontario

resident, he will continue to press his provincial government to treat its francophone minority the same way we will treat the anglophone minority in Quebec.

However, he said something that was inaccurate. Although the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are from Quebec, they do not control monetary policy, as we have seen in the past. Remember when Toronto faced inflation and an overheated economy? What happened? They implemented an inflation-fighting policy that hurt all of Canada.

Very briefly, if he believes that we will have no more influence on monetary policy, let me tell him that whether we print our own currency or use another one, selling off all our Canadian dollars on the market would cause a major decline in the value of the Canadian dollar.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Sorry, but the hon. member's time is up.

[*English*]

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in the debate on the opposition motion and indicate why I cannot support the motion.

I cannot do so because I believe that together we are a great nation, a strong, vibrant and wealthy nation that is inclusive, a nation and a society that knows how to accommodate French and English, native peoples and cultures from the four corners of the world.

(1205)

Quebec within Canada has accomplished an extraordinary amount. To quote Mr. Parizeau:

[*Translation*]

“—what our people has accomplished in 30 years is remarkable.”

[*English*]

To go further into the speech he gave on December 6, he talked as the minister did earlier about the accomplishments of Quebec, a society which lacked a ministry of education that now has a technology so advanced that it exports the majority of it, a society which did not have a business culture, which:

[*Translation*]

“—has produced internationally renowned industrial and financial giants. A society which was said to be without a history and without a literature now has its own films, singers, dancers, writers who travel the world.”

Supply

[*English*]

It is an extraordinary accomplishment. In his speech of December 6 Mr. Parizeau said that the preamble to the declaration would be a declaration:

[*Translation*]

“—like the American Declaration of Independence of which we still hear echoes more than 200 years after it was written.”

[*English*]

Exactly. I had a chance to look at the Declaration of Independence of the United States following Mr. Parizeau's comments. I read from that declaration:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them one with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

What are the causes? The Declaration of Independence goes on:

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

The Declaration of Independence has the advantage of listing the causes for separation and for breaking the bonds, indicating why there was respect for the opinions of mankind. The causes are listed:

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of absolute Tyranny over these States.

Canada has not been tyrannous and with due respect to the official opposition it has not said it is. The Declaration of Independence declared that the facts should be submitted to a candid world and we ask for these facts. What were their facts? The King of Britain, and I quote:

—has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

In Canada despite the power of the federal government to have disallowance of legislation of the provincial legislatures, it has not been used in the case of Quebec in recent times. Indeed it has not been used over the last half century.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained— He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

No legislature in Canada has been dissolved.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

There may be a point there. I think you will agree, Madam Speaker, that whatever the complications and burdens that

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members suffer, it is not so unusual and uncomfortable that it represents a great burden. It goes on:

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies with the Consent of our legislature.

We have heard recently from the official opposition that rather than complaining about standing armies within the province of Quebec, we hear the request that existing institutions which represent the Canadian military be sustained in that province. It goes on:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

We heard earlier today the official opposition speak about the importance of the free trade agreement with the United States, indeed taking some credit as a province, not as a party obviously, for having that particular agreement sustained in the Parliament of Canada. Far from cutting off trade, we have increased the possibility for Quebec, not only through the free trade agreement, but also through the WTO, recently approved. It goes on:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

That has not been done.

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

Or:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

Canada is not tyranny. Separation would be weakness. If we would be weak and not just as a country, the weakened soul as a society, separation would enfeeble all of us.

(1210)

Out of alliances come strength. Out of separation comes disintegration. Out of inclusiveness comes tolerance. The success of our history to date is proof that it is not necessary to break up a country to satisfy our mutual aspirations.

Since this is our national Parliament, I assume that all of us here have the best interests of the country at heart. I sometimes forget that the agenda of the official opposition is not in the best interests of the whole country but rather the separation, the dissolution of the country.

Where else in the world would a country and a political system be sufficiently flexible to tolerate an official opposition whose only goal is the breakup of the country? That is not tyranny.

Only in Canada, you say? Absolutely, and that is true. The presence of the official opposition of the Bloc Quebecois in Parliament speaks louder than any words. It is a living expression of Canada's deeply rooted and unshakeable commitment to democracy. Our political system respects the wishes of Quebec-

ers and demonstrates that our system can accommodate the expression of the views represented by the official opposition which we hear daily in this assembly. If the opposition truly had the interest of the constituents at heart it would use its presence in Parliament to take every opportunity to strengthen not to diminish the gains acquired over the generations.

Approached constructively this Parliament could be used to further the interests of Quebec. Instead of taking this opportunity to secure Quebec's place in Canada, the official opposition too often undermines Quebec's strong place in Canada as a full partner in the country.

As the official opposition the Bloc has a responsibility to assist in the governance of the country. Its obligation not just to Quebec but to the rest of the country is to work constructively to build a greater and even stronger nation.

As the opposition the Bloc has a legitimate role to play in ensuring that the government does not overlook the interests of anyone. It could keep a watchful eye on the interests of Quebec and at the same time help build something larger. It could ensure that as the country goes from strength to strength, Quebec is along enjoying the benefits too.

We heard earlier today comments about the status quo but surely in Canada, in Quebec, everywhere in the world there can be no status quo today, as the member for Rosedale indicated a few moments ago.

Status quo is to stop growing. To stop growing is to stagnate. There can be no status quo in the modern world. Since its inception Canada has been a nation that has changed. We are changing today. We are changing in the life of this Parliament. For example an historic breakthrough occurred when the first ministers of this country agreed on a process to begin the elimination of internal trade barriers, an agreement that was of great importance and will be built upon and is supported I believe by members opposite.

We did not need, it must be said, a constitutional amendment to do this. When common sense and our own self interest told us that it no longer made any sense whatever to be part of the largest free trade bloc in the world and still maintain internal barriers which are an obstacle to prosperity, we found a way out. In the same spirit we will find a solution to other problems. For example the two territories and eight of the provinces have signed action plans with the federal government to reduce overlap and duplication in a host of areas.

Yesterday the minister of Indian affairs signed a milestone agreement with the native peoples of Manitoba opening the way to full self-government. This is the product of negotiations and a willingness to come to an agreement. It was not necessary to

rewrite the Constitution and this is not preservation of the status quo.

What we are offering Quebecers and Canadians is not the status quo. We are offering a country in evolution that is gearing itself to prosper in the next century. In that next century we expect and we hope that Canada with Quebec will play an even more prominent role. It is obvious to everyone that current political, economic and technological developments around the world are leading to an era of globalism where individual nation states play a lesser role. The previous speaker for the Bloc paid attention to that very concern.

Countries which are not integrally tied into a larger alliance are going to be bypassed. This is not the time to set up borders. It is the time to bring down borders.

(1215)

The Europeans, for example, have come to realize that the nationalist balkanization of the continent will not be sustainable in the future. They are moving inexorably toward the creation of a European federation. They have a long way to go but the development of the federation is now in sight. Last evening I heard a Frenchman and a German speaking to each other, talking about the common cause co-operation which they have built. I thought to myself, what an extraordinary accomplishment this is, for two nations that have literally killed millions of each other's citizens in the twentieth century, within living memory of many French and Germans. But they have accomplished a lot and that is what they emphasized to each other.

They still have a long way to go but the development of the federation will take place and is taking place. Canada, we must remind ourselves, is light years ahead of the Europeans on this count; it is one of the oldest and most successful federations in the world.

In conclusion, the adventure we have had together in building the country is the best guarantee we have that once again, together, we can continue to build a country for ourselves and for our children that is envied in all the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's speech. I must tell him that, contrary to what he said, the Official Opposition is playing its role of watchdog regarding the government's activities and the legislation tabled in this House.

So far, that is for a year now, the Bloc Québécois has done all that was necessary to provide the government with the necessary tools to stimulate employment, but the government did nothing. I think that we do play our role very effectively.

Supply

Also, after 35 years of constitutional failures, do you not believe that the time has come for Quebec to get the powers it needs to control its destiny? This is what Mr. Parizeau is inviting us to do with his bill. He is inviting all Quebecers, including people in my riding of Chicoutimi and in my region of Saguenay—Lac—Saint—Jean, young and old, regardless of their political affiliation, to participate in this debate, which is as important for the rest of Canada as it is for Quebec.

I must recognize that the hon. member was the only one this morning, from the government side, who did not question the legality of the proposed draft bill, and he deserves credit for that.

The member referred to the federation of European countries. I should point out that these countries are also sovereign nations. Quebec simply wants to have the powers it needs to become the country Quebecers want.

I have a question for the hon. member. Some Liberal MPs from Quebec said that the federal government should abstain from holding its own referendum in Quebec.

The hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine told us that, in his opinion, this was a Quebec referendum and that it was up to Quebecers to decide their constitutional future within the federation.

Does the hon. member agree with these two views?

(1220)

[*English*]

Mr. English: Madam Speaker, several points and several questions have been raised. I will try to respond briefly to them.

In talking about the role of the official opposition, I did not comment precisely on what was being done in this Parliament. I was encouraging the members to work together with all parties to strengthen the Canadian nation. There are many opportunities to do so; in committees, in Parliament and in the legislation that is brought forward. By working together we could face the many challenges we all admit this country is facing. The role the hon. member suggested of monitoring or supervising the process that occurs here I think is a limitation on the possibility of what a parliamentarian can do.

The hon. member and his colleagues would do well to consider the greater possibilities that reside in this Chamber, possibilities that can lead to a strengthening of the interests of all Canadians and Quebecers as well.

The constitutional failures of the last 30 years were discussed by the hon. member and he asked were these not sufficient proof of the need to consider separation. In Mr. Parizeau's declaration of December 6 he opened with comments about what had been achieved apart from the Constitution.

Supply

I would like to talk about what Quebec and Canada have achieved apart from the Constitution but in terms of what Quebec has achieved according to Mr. Parizeau. He said:

[*Translation*]

“Together, we have made the past 30 years a unique period in our history.”

[*English*]

This is extremely important in the view of the premier of Quebec. In the 1960s a vigorous cultural life was built in the province and a modern state was built. In the 1970s the democratization of education of the society occurred. In the 1980s:

[*Translation*]

“—in spite of a severe recession, we attained economic power—”

[*English*]

He goes on to talk about the widening of Quebec’s presence within the world.

Rather than focus on the limitations and the failures, following on the words of the prime minister of Quebec, one could look at the accomplishments of our country which are truly magnificent. They look to the future. They look to the importance of co-operation and they also point to the necessity of keeping the country together.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I recognize the hon. member for Terrebonne. You have about two minutes left to make some comments and ask a question.

Mr. Sauvageau: Madam Speaker, how much time do I have left?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Two minutes.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have a few moments to elaborate on the comments made by my colleague from the government party.

I also want to thank my party for letting me speak on what I see as a fundamental issue and I want to remind my colleagues that this issue is the one and only reason all of us, in the Bloc Québécois, have entered public life.

So, today’s debate is extremely significant, even though the time at our disposal is limited. In the little time I have, I want to invite the people in my riding of Terrebonne, the people in the Lanaudière region, to take part in the consultation process. Contrary to what we were told earlier, the people in favour of our project are invited to participate in order to examine in depth our position and to show their support. Those who are against are also invited.

Finally, I want to ask my colleague a question related to what his leader said in 1990, during a brunch where 800 Liberals were gathered. His leader said that the Liberal Party of Canada would propose a new social contract and a major constitutional reform. He made that statement on October 28, 1990. Where do things stand now?

(1225)

[*English*]

Mr. English: Madam Speaker, the situation that exists in Canada is not one where we are satisfied with the status quo. We are changing the country. We have social security reform. We have a major budget coming forward. We have programs in the area of foreign affairs. We have programs in many areas that will affect very much the way the country is organized and the way it functions.

We are not committed to a federalism that is static. We have a flexible federalism. That is the kind of country we intend to work with.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I rise today to speak on the motion presented by my colleague for Laurier—Sainte-Marie: That this House enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec in order to allow Quebecers to chart their own political and constitutional future.

On September 12, 1994, in Quebec we finally did elect a separatist government which clearly puts its option on the table and asks all Quebecers to take part in a huge democratic operation. This is totally new! It is a clear, simple and open process where nothing is hidden. Liberals from the provincial and the federal levels have claimed that they will not take part in this process, which they consider illegitimate.

The Prime Minister and his friends protest and try to minimize this process initiated by the Quebec government and its impact. Federalists try to ridicule and trivialize the process. This is too bad, since they thus demonstrate a lack of respect for the duly elected Quebec government.

Their reaction appears normal to us and was rather predictable. For once, they are not the ones to set the agenda and the final result of this vast democratic operation will not be a new kind of federalism but rather sovereignty for Quebec, the creation of a new country.

I really wonder what federalists expected of a sovereignist government. Did they think that the Parti Québécois would ask Quebecers if they would like to have renewed federalism or, as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs recently put it, flexible federalism? Come on! Be serious and show some respect for the Quebec government! I am sure that once you will be over the shock, you will want to sit down with us and express your point

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of view. Mr. Parizeau has extended an invitation to you and it would be in your interest to accept it. Besides, I see today that, thanks to our motion, you have already entered the debate and this is a good sign.

I would like now to touch on a sector that Quebec's sovereignty will help simplify and make more efficient and effective, that is, job training. For years there has been a consensus in Quebec that job training has to be under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Employers, unions, workers as well as social and economic groups all agree: Quebec must have all powers for manpower training. Everybody agrees that federal programs and budgets must be repatriated in order to develop a consistent and intelligent manpower training policy.

For years the federal government has turned a deaf ear to Quebec's request in this respect. It systematically refuses to give Quebec what it is asking for. It hides behind national objectives and its responsibility for unemployment insurance to intervene in an area under provincial jurisdiction.

This intrusion by the federal government has created two manpower networks in Quebec. A vast number of federal programs overlap and duplicate provincial programs. According to André Bourbeau, a former Quebec minister, this situation wastes some \$275 million a year of taxpayers' money in Quebec alone.

In 1991, in a policy statement on manpower development, this former Quebec Minister of Manpower, a Liberal and a federalist, said: "For many years Quebec has claimed control over policy instruments that influence the job market. This means that the Government of Quebec and its economic partners are demanding that laws, budgets, institutions, programs and services related to manpower and to the job market be under one authority. Quebecers with an interest in the job market recognize almost unanimously that manpower policies must be developed by those who are closest to the various areas of the job market." What has the federal government done to respond to these rational demands from Quebec? Nothing! It has rejected them out of hand.

(1230)

Meanwhile, Quebec's workers and employers are suffering as a result of this situation. Indeed, the double system is cumbersome, slow and complex. Workers and employers do not need that. They need the exact opposite. They need training that is effective, fast and convenient.

An employer or a new company looking for workers cannot afford to wait around for years until these people are trained. As soon as companies announce their requirements, the training system must be able to provide a quick response. This kind of

efficient and quick response is particularly important, considering the new technologies being used. And the same applies to workers. They must be given the means to acquire training without being penalized.

Recently, I was given an example of this lack of flexibility in the training system by one of my constituents. This person wanted to take an 18-month course in office automation. The Canada Employment Centre told her she could not do that because the federal government had only approved 12-month courses. Many workers who want to get off unemployment or welfare are faced with this kind of situation which makes no sense at all.

In Quebec, we want to make the system more flexible, and we want to make it smarter. Today, we cannot do that. The federal presence prevents us from making these crucial improvements in the system. Today, the federal presence is paralysing the entire system. In 1993, Canada ranked twenty-second and last, and I repeat, twenty-second and last among developed countries because of its very poor level of in-house training. This figure is not often mentioned by these people across the way. It is a little embarrassing, I suppose.

Let us consider briefly why people no longer know where to turn. The federal government is interfering in this area with 27 programs in addition to Quebec's 25. The federal government interferes by maintaining 100 Canada Employment Centres, although Quebec has put in place la Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre. The mandate of the SQDM was originally to establish genuine one-stop counters in all regions in Quebec.

I am referring to genuine one-stop counters for Quebec, not a façade like we saw in the Canada-Saskatchewan agreement which, in fact, subordinates the province's jurisdiction to the federal authority. In other words, the kind of one-stop counter that even Daniel Johnson, Quebec's Liberal leader, criticized and rejected.

Today, the SQDM acts more like a manager of federal funding, without any real say over how it is spent. The lack of co-ordination between the two networks means that the unemployed are not getting the kind of service they need. In an internal memo, the federal government revealed that, in the spring of 1993, close to 25,000 unemployed workers, although they had been referred to a training program, could not be accommodated.

Quebec sovereignty will make it possible to clean up the sorry mess the federal government put us in. The federal lack of willingness to give Quebec what we have been demanding for years in this respect, worse yet, its increasing encroachment on

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our turf is the last straw which will make people vote yes, very soon.

Then, we will be able to put in place the system we have been yearning for for so long, an intelligent system which will efficiently meet the needs of the labour market. Bye bye, dirty old federal machine which has not had an oil change in years.

(1235)

To conclude, I invite all the people in Laurentides, in my area, my riding, to participate in the regional committees which will hold hearings in February. For the first time, Quebecers will have the chance to say clearly and freely what kind of society they want and whether or not they want a sovereign Quebec. Individuals and groups of all allegiance, join us to have a democratic look at the sovereigntist option. Express your point of view, voice your fears, suggest improvements; the committees which will crisscross Quebec will welcome you and want to hear from you.

At the end of the day, Quebecers will decide if they want their own country, a country which will reflect their aspirations, a country in which they will be fulfilled.

The process the Government of Quebec is offering us is unique. It is democratic, it will make it possible for each and everyone to be heard.

I will never stop fighting to establish the country of Quebec. I will do so with strength and vigour, because my most fervent wish is to hand down to my children a country called Quebec.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a couple of comments on the member's dissertation.

I am very concerned about my fellow Canadians in Quebec. I am concerned when I look at their financial situation in Canada today. The government of that province does not seem to want to address the real problems facing the people of Quebec. I look at a province that has the highest per capita deficit on a provincial basis of all the provinces in Canada: \$9,400 for every man, woman and child in the province of Quebec, a debt which is 40 per cent financed not only outside the borders of Quebec but outside the borders of Canada.

These people in the international trading environment are looking very closely at Quebec, at the debate that is going on here today. As the province of Quebec goes out to refinance its debt on the international marketplace it is going to find fewer and fewer people interested in investing in that province. I am very concerned that the average person in the province of Quebec is going to start watching their lifestyle and their standard of living decline.

I note also that the last election in the province of Quebec was basically on the matter of bring us good government. I am concerned with the premier of that province who was a finance minister during a period in time of Quebec's history that drove up the deficit higher than any other administration: 285 per cent during his administration of that system.

I simply want to ask: What is going on here, what is happening? The day after separation no new day, there will be no change. The reality is that we are talking about transferring powers from Ottawa to Quebec City. I do not know how that helps people in Chicoutimi.

The reality is that people want control of their own destinies. Our government has been spending a lot of time discussing social policy review and other areas that affect federal legislation and it is going to the people, it is talking to the people in the streets on how they want to control those aspects of their lives. Creating new embassies all around the world is a duplication of expenditure and a cost to the people of Quebec.

My colleague often talks about Canada as a hypothetical country. To me the state of Quebec is an illusion. People will not be any better off; they will be worse off.

We have some common things, the people of Quebec and the people of the rest of Canada, common things that unite us. One of the major ones is our proximity to the United States and the economic power that country wields on this side of North America.

(1240)

I think it has always been in our best interest, as a united country and as a united people, to be part of a culture which is both French and English.

I would like to ask my colleague how she thinks things are going to be so magically different.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Guay: Madam Speaker, the scare campaigns do not scare Quebecers any more. We have been subjected to them for over 30 years, but they do not work anymore. Quebec has all the tools necessary to take charge of its affairs. For years it has asked for the powers needed to assume responsibility and develop.

At the present time, business is expanding as never before and faster than in any other province. Quebec is very active on the various markets. When it takes on all the powers of an independent country, I am sure it will develop very fast on all markets: the Quebec market, the Canadian market, the international market, as well as the American market. I am not worried about that.

Once we take back our powers, the \$275 million wasted annually on manpower training, as I mentioned, will be invested in training for us, training for our people, for the development of

Quebec. I do not fear any kind of collapse the day after the referendum is won, nothing like that will happen. On the contrary, a new country will be born and we will move ahead economically.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Madam Speaker, as you may have guessed, I proudly welcome this opportunity to take part in today's debate and to join my colleagues in deploring the fact that federal members who represent Quebec here in Ottawa have refused to take part in what is probably the most legitimate democratic process ever initiated by the National Assembly.

Quebec is a democracy. Quebec has one of the oldest parliament in the world, and the entire history of Quebec's nationalism is entwined with the history of democracy. Earlier, I was appalled to hear the hon. member for Hull, who is responsible for the federal government's referendum strategy, trying to discredit the initiative tabled by Mr. Parizeau's government a few days ago.

One thing is clear. History tells us that very few nations have had a chance to write their own constitution. Consider George Washington, Jefferson, Madison and all the great thinkers who helped to draft constitutional texts, and who did so because they were members of the elite. They did it because they were members of the educated class.

What we are saying is that in our quest for sovereignty, we want to have the broadest possible democratic base. This is an opportunity for all Quebecers, regardless of their social class, political allegiance or personal wealth, to come forward and say what kind of constitution they want and what kind of society they want to live in. Because that is what a constitution is all about. A constitution says what we are and what we want to be.

By giving all Quebecers a chance to take part in this democratic process, the Premier is saying to the National Assembly, to Ottawa and to the world: We see sovereignty as part of a quest for democracy. We cannot plan our future, we cannot make this wonderful plan for sovereignty a fact without the participation of all Quebecers.

As many journalists and opinion-makers have pointed out, the situation we have today is different from the situation in 1980. There is no federalist leader with any credibility, and we can hardly expect the present Prime Minister to be able to inspire the federal troops.

(1245)

In a democracy, the best way to fight against something is to propose something better. There is no other way. Therefore, the best way to oppose sovereignty in 1994 is to show that federalism can be attractive. If the Quebec federalists, whether the hon. member for Saint-Léonard, the hon. member for Saint-Henri—Westmount or any other member from Quebec, believe in their

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option, they will come forward and address the 16 regional commissions in order to tell us why, in 1994, Quebecers should stick to federalism. They will be welcome to defend their option. But the truth is that federalism does not get anyone carried away.

When the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with his big ego, suggests that we talk about flexible federalism, we all know that flexible federalism depends on the deficit. But right now, that deficit is so high that the Minister of Finance cannot even watch himself spend. That is the situation. That is why federalists cannot come and sit at a table in good faith and propose a plan for renewed federalism.

We spoke earlier about the economic accomplishments of Quebec, but what makes it special also stems from its deep respect for every component of democracy. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the draft bill tabled before us says something crucial, something all members representing English Canada should keep in mind. Section 3 of this draft bill says that we will draft a constitution which will include a charter of human rights and that—and I will quote section 3—“The constitution shall include a charter of human rights and freedoms. It shall guarantee the English-speaking community that its identity and institutions will be preserved. It shall also recognize the right of Aboriginal nations to self-government on lands over which they have full ownership.”

The scope of a section such as this is not well understood. We are saying to the English-speaking people, at the beginning of this debate: Your community is essential to our future. It is with the 900,000 anglophones in Quebec today that we want to think about the future, and we are telling them: In our sovereignist project, we will give you all the place that is rightfully yours.

This is not new because you will recall that, as early as 1967, René Lévesque distanced himself from a segment of the nationalist movement that did not want to recognize the right of the English-speaking community to public schools funded by the government.

We are saying, at the beginning of this debate, to the English-speaking community as well as the aboriginal people, who are our two most important minorities: Not only will you have a place in a sovereign Quebec, not only will we recognize all the rights that are yours today, but we also want you to take part in this democratic process that is taking place.

In this regard, I think that Quebec is probably a better example of democracy than Ottawa. As for the eleven Aboriginal nations who live on the territory of Quebec and form a community of almost 55,000 people, let us not forget that René Lévesque, that great democrat—and I must say that very few members opposite have the courage to quote from the Referendum Act, a tool he left us to consult people—and his government, back in 1985, allowed the eleven Aboriginal nations to be

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recognized all together for what they were. We want these rights to be entrenched in the next constitution of Quebec.

Remember that Quebec has experienced that constitution. There is a misunderstanding about the revolutionary nature of what is happening. We are about to recognize the right of our two major minorities to participate in the development of the constitution, while throughout our history, we were forced, as Quebecers, to accept a constitution about which we had never been consulted. It is absolutely outrageous to hear Quebecers and Canadians being told that the process is rather undemocratic because the people will be consulted.

(1250)

From the Treaty of Paris to the Union Act and up until 1867, Quebecers were never consulted. We want to make up for that, we want as much people as possible to participate in the movement towards democracy that is getting under way. We repeat today, as Premier Parizeau said, that in the next constitution, we are going to recognize the right to self-government of Aboriginal nations, who were in fact the first people to occupy this territory. Such recognition shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the territorial integrity of Quebec. We say to aboriginal peoples that they will have the right—and this right will be entrenched if they so wish—to their traditions, their cultures, their lands and their language. We say to the English-speaking community that we want them to have a public school system, from preschool to university, which is giving them full participation in Quebec life.

In conclusion, I want to say that if federalists still have beliefs, if federalists still believe in intellectual integrity, their place is before the 16 regional commissions which will travel throughout Quebec, because if their option is good enough to convince Quebecers, as they argue, they have to put themselves through this consultation test. It is not by refusing to take part in a democratic process that these people will be able to revitalize an option that is stalling but still has the right to exist.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette–Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few comments and then ask the hon. member some questions.

First, I would like to make a correction. When my hon. colleague refers to English Canada, he refers at the same time to the protection of minorities in Quebec. I am a francophone member of Parliament and a Canadian and I come from New Brunswick which is not part of English Canada or French Canada, but of Canada.

The hon. members across the floor emphasize the importance of being honest and open and say it is all a matter of choice, but I could show you here that the first page of the draft bill is entitled: An Act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec. They do not even have the courage of their convictions. Once again, they

talk about sovereignty when in fact, the objective is the separation of Quebec. We are asked to get involved in what is proposed on the first page of the draft bill.

Allow me to turn to the second page. This draft bill sets out the political objective. As a member from the Bloc pointed out a moment ago: Come on, we have elected a PQ government in Quebec. I hope you were not expecting us to offer a clear choice between federalism or separation to the people of Quebec. This is what she said and it is obviously what they have in mind here.

They say that this bill suggests that Quebec will become a sovereign country democratically. How can they talk about democracy when they have already made up their minds about all the issues to be debated, how they are going to proceed, how to use the currency, share the assets and divide the debt? This is not a clear choice. They are not showing the people of Quebec what the real situation is now and what it could be tomorrow. We are invited, in my case as a so-called member for English Canada, a federalist—

Mr. Lebel: Not you.

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: Are you not inviting me?

Mr. Guimond: No.

Mr. Lebel: No, you are not invited.

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: You are not inviting me. Therefore, you do not want Quebecers to know exactly what they are getting into. Thank you very much for not inviting me to participate.

Mr. Guimond: You have nothing to do with that!

(1255)

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: You are going to have to decide at some point. You will have to!

I wish to stress that the document I read, the document before me, calls for the participation of the people, presumably only those of the same political stripe, since I was just told that I do not have the right to take part because I am a federalist. Yet, Mr. Parizeau says I do have the right.

An hon. member: You do not know how to read!

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: Madam Speaker, it is obvious—

An hon. member: She does not know how to read!

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: —that this document is undemocratic and does not lead to a debate on the options. It is indeed a dictatorship in disguise.

As I mentioned earlier, when Quebecers stood up, they rejected the Duplessis regime, they said no to dictatorship. I am convinced that Quebecers will make a sound decision when asked a clear-cut question, not one like this, which is only propaganda.

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I wish to tell the members of the Bloc that, even if they do not want me in Quebec, Madam Speaker, my roots are in Quebec, Quebec is part of Canada, and I will go there whenever I please. Therefore, I think we should stop here because the members of the Bloc are just showing their fellow citizens that they no longer want anyone else. They want to remain isolated. Something I regret.

An hon. member: I have a question, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but time is up and I really cannot extend it.

Mr. Ménard: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. It was up to you to monitor the member's speaking time. You know very well that the process we are in—

An hon. member: Enough of that!

Mr. Ménard: I am not talking to you, I am talking to the Chair. It was up to you to monitor the speaking time—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order, please! I am giving the hon. member 30 seconds.

Mr. Gagliano: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. The 10-minute period is for questions and comments. The hon. member chose to comment, therefore there was no question. You cannot change the rules every time a member complains.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hon. government member is absolutely right. The time has expired.

Mr. Duceppe: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. You recognized the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonnette. You do not have to take orders from a government member. I think that the—

Mr. Ménard: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I respect your decision not to continue debate. As you are independent, I hope you are not going to let your decision be influenced by the hon. member for Saint-Léonard, who would have been better advised—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Resuming debate. The hon. Secretary of State has the floor.

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, I rise in this debate to speak against the motion introduced by the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Ménard: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I want to be heard.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I was under the impression that you had understood that there was no time left. Following comments from both sides of the House I came to a decision. My decision is clear. The Secretary of State has the floor. The issue is closed. The Secretary of State has the floor.

Mr. Ménard: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

(1300)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): One moment, please. Order! I will not accept threats from anyone.

Resuming debate, the Secretary of State.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I was saying, I rise to speak against the motion of the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. The Bloc Québécois members are trying to use the same tactics as their colleagues from the Parti Québécois; it is quite normal, both parties are separatist.

Both are trying to make Quebecers believe that the process they are putting forward is clever. Being clever and sly has nothing to do with democracy. Democracy does not resort to clever tricks. When I read the motion by the Bloc Québécois, I was reminded of Mr. Parizeau's own comments boasting that he had found a clever way to convince Quebecers of the validity of the separatist ideology.

In turn, the Bloc members are resorting to Mr. Parizeau's clever trick. They are trying to make us believe that the process he started is democratic. When I read the motion, I came to the conclusion that this House cannot, in a million years, endorse such a trick. This House must not support a process which does not lead to the real question. This House must not support a motion which is trying to hijack Quebec's established and legitimate consultation process. This House, this bastion of democracy, must defeat the motion by the Bloc Québécois.

It is also obvious that the process advocated by the Parti Québécois and its mirror image, the Bloc Québécois, was conceived to deliberately disguise the real debate, to lead Quebecers away from the real question, from the debate on the question the Parti Québécois itself put forward on many occasions. This question, the real one, the one the Parti Québécois had committed itself to put to a vote, was to clearly ask Quebecers whether or not they wanted to separate from Canada.

However, the Parti Québécois, and by default, the Bloc Québécois, preferred to skip this step. According to Mr. Parizeau, the people of Quebec should not be asked if they want to separate from Canada. They must not be asked to vote on a clear and simple question as part of the process set in motion under the referendum act. No, that would be too democratic and not shrewd enough.

Mr. Parizeau decided instead to force the people of Quebec to take part in a process, the outcome of which is already known, one that offers only one option and they are required to make a profession of faith for separation in order to take part in this process. Let us not delude ourselves. Parizeau has no intention of letting Quebecers who do not think like him influence his

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process and its outcome. He has clearly stated that it would be difficult to change his mind about certain aspects of his draft bill. How are we to believe that the process will be democratic then?

(1305)

How could a federalist who does not share the separatist ideal feel free to express her concerns to a commission mandated to consider the basis of a sovereign Quebec, separated from Canada? She will not even be given the opportunity to question separation or discuss the issue. She is invited to share with Mr. Parizeau her views on the choice of a currency, her citizenship, and the future of Quebec apart from Canada.

Where will federalist Quebecers find a forum where they can exercise their right to speak and put across their fundamental opposition to separation? They will quite simply have no forum, because the Parti Quebecois just does not want to hear what they have to say.

As we say in French, the PQ has no use for anyone who does not share its opinion. The Parti Quebecois has already decided the future of Quebecers. The PQ and Bloc members are the only ones who know what is good for the people of Quebec. They have charted their future without even consulting them.

In the interest of the people of Quebec, the Parti Quebecois will take Quebec out of Canada. Too bad for Quebecers who believe in federalism and object to separation. Too bad for you, if you wanted to express your concerns and fears about, or rejection of the separatist option. Just do not be afraid.

The Parti Quebecois is telling these people that there is nothing to be afraid of, since it has all been decided: economic association, currency, legislation and so on. All they have to do is vote on a bill that has already been passed by the Pequist majority. They do not even have to worry about the desirability of separation because, as far as they are concerned, it is a done deal.

The Parti Quebecois says that it is the only option, that there is nothing else. Such is the democratic process PQ style. Everything has already been decided in advance. It is as though your neighbour Gilles woke you up on Saturday morning to tell you: "You are moving. The decision has already been made. You have no choice. If you want, however, we can discuss the size of the moving van you will need".

No one could describe this as an open approach allowing all viewpoints to be heard. You could not even object to your moving; it would be a done deal.

Like your neighbour Gilles, the opposition member is asking us to say: "No problem. Even though I have always been against moving, it does not matter. I will move. Let us now discuss the size of the van".

Such is the democratic logic of the motion they are asking us to adopt. Not only is the process rigged but there is an additional obstacle. Federalists are not allowed equal representation on the commissions advocated by PQ members. They are not given access to the same resources and do not have as much time to speak as the separatists. The process advocated by the PQ goes against the very spirit of the Referendum Act.

René Lévesque, who was a proud believer in fairness and parity, would be ashamed. Those who define themselves as his heirs are now subverting the basic principles underlying Quebec's tradition of consulting its people. How can they ask us today to ratify a process that flies in the face of democratic principles?

The PQ process is forcing people to conclude that separation is inevitable, that Quebecers no longer have a choice. I am denouncing this bluff by the Quebec government, just as I reject the motion tabled by the Bloc Quebecois.

Nowhere is it said or written that Quebecers must separate from Canada, and that to fully realize their future, they must create a new country. Quebecers already have a country, a country that they built, that belongs to them, that reflects their culture, their language, their achievements, a country where they are free to grow without constraints. This country is Canada.

(1310)

Quebecers were directly involved in building and developing this country. They did more than preside over its birth. They are responsible for it and contribute to its growth. They are essential members of this country.

The opposition's motion asks us to presume that Quebecers want to break their ties with their country, to reject a country that they built and which belongs to them, without asking them whether or not they want to take that road.

In all conscience, I cannot support this motion. I cannot vote for a motion which is contrary to the spirit of a citizen's most basic right in this country, namely the right to free expression of his opinion.

I call on all members of this House to vote against this motion, to vote no to the trickery which subverts the democratic process, to vote no to the ruse which hides the real debate. That is why we must defeat this motion, out of respect for democracy.

The proof of all that I just said is in the press release from the Premier of Quebec when he tabled his draft bill. I would like to quote the third paragraph of this press release from the Premier who tabled a draft bill on Quebec sovereignty this week. Here is what it says, in the third paragraph: "A vast process of information and participation will get under way to give all Quebecers an opportunity to take part directly in the discussion which is beginning. The people can comment on the plan, discuss it and propose improvements—" Madam Speaker, it says "propose improvements", not propose changes, only improve it.

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Again I quote from the same press release from the Premier of Quebec, this time the fourth paragraph: "Through this process, Quebecers will also be asked to draft a Declaration of Sovereignty".

Nothing is said about asking people whether they agree that Quebec should separate from Canada. We are presented with a plan. The Government of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois think that Quebecers agree on separation. However, according to opinion polls, the majority, at least 60 per cent, are against separation. Although the government was elected on the promise of being a good government and holding a referendum on separation later, it is proposing a bill as if it had received a mandate to trigger this mechanism leading to separation. It is quite clear.

When we say that not only Liberal members in Quebec City and Ottawa do not want to participate, even important groups in Quebec that took part in the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, which my colleagues opposite in the Bloc Québécois have mentioned repeatedly this morning, like the farmers' union, the president of the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce, the president of the employers' council and the president of the Quebec manufacturers' association said that they would not participate in this process because it is undemocratic. They would have taken part if it had been something like the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, but not in a process like this. We are not the only ones. We do not want to participate. We participate fully in Quebec life. We want to take part in a debate where people can express themselves and make points for Canadian federalism and for separation. Once Quebecers have made their decision, then their government can table draft legislation like this and tell them: You have voted for separation. Here is how we will proceed.

(1315)

What is Mr. Parizeau doing right now? He is skipping the basic step, because he has already initiated the process, without even securing a mandate to separate. The answer is no, a categorical no, and we will fight the process all the way to prove it. That answer is certainly the one Quebecers will give Mr. Parizeau, and here in the House, we say no to the Bloc members.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Saint-Léonard for participating in the current debate taking place in Quebec, this in spite of his views. He is acting like a true politician, as well as a solid and honest man, and I commend him for that.

However, I find that the hon. member is too easily outraged. I guess customs change with the times. Government members have been using the word democracy all day.

But remember the unilateral patriation of the Constitution. That was not the work of angels. It was done in 1982, by the Liberals opposite. Back then, they were proud of their democracy. The current Prime Minister, who is from Quebec, was the one behind that dirty job on Quebecers. What happened? It is very simple. They did not try to shaft Quebec. With his typical smile, which has become his trademark, he said: But we still got them, did we not? Just like a kid who did something bad.

The Liberals were not scandalized back in 1981. I remember Mr. Lévesque saying to these people, the day after the night of the long knives, that their rejoicing at Quebec's expense would end some day. Indeed, that rejoicing just might end very soon.

We mentioned the patriation of the Constitution. It goes without saying that this was not Canadian federalism's finest hour. René Lévesque was not impressed; he was no more impressed than the hon. member for Saint-Léonard is now when he talks about being forced to move.

At the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, the Bloquistes and the separatists did not have the upper hand. Yet, you were not upset by the undemocratic structure of that commission. You remained very quiet. Who took part in the 1982 coup, the unilateral patriation? At the time, you had relegated democracy to some dark place where the sun does not shine.

Madam Speaker, such a figure of speech is not unparliamentary.

Quebecers, including the hon. member for Saint-Léonard, are invited to a sort of summit. They are asked to give their views on the issue. Anything can be amended in this draft bill, which contains 17 clauses.

The preamble will be decided by Quebecers. I do not remember being consulted on the preamble of the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in 1982. Democracy works only if you agree with the Liberal Party. Then it is democracy at play and the Liberals can have anything done to Quebec, usually by a Quebecer, because it does not look quite as bad. In fact, we know who their hatchet man is; he is not here today, but we know who he is.

It is now up to Quebecers to speak up and even draft the preamble of this historic draft bill.

(1320)

Maybe he did not realize it, but the hon. member for Saint-Léonard just scored a point for the federalists. I congratulate him on it, but I wish he would not say that the process is undemocratic. I think the members on the other side of the House should be the last ones to talk about democracy.

Look what they did to democracy in the famous Bill C-22 on Pearson Airport; look what they do to democracy in Bill C-62 which was introduced so innocuously and which the government will use to give away huge chunks of federal operations to its friends, probably the same people who were involved in the

Supply

Pearson Airport deal. Since the government can no longer subsidize its friends, it gives away chunks of government operations. Democracy? I say to the hon. member for Saint-Léonard that this has nothing to do with democracy.

I want to know something. You know that democracy also includes the right not to get involved. Some communities may decide not to take my advice, not to get involved, and not to contribute to the process. If they choose not to take part, it will not make me cry. I will respect their right, because it is their most basic right not to get involved.

But I still want to stress that they are welcome to participate in this debate, if they live in Quebec, of course. I hope that members opposite will have the magnanimity to respect their cultural communities, especially French-speaking communities outside Quebec, which will not be included in the debate either.

To conclude, I just want to say that I am deeply offended to hear our process being called undemocratic, especially by some of the big names in the Liberal Party who were here in 1982.

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, this morning, the hon. member mentioned all the amendments proposed to the Constitution in the last 30 years. He spoke of the patriation of the Constitution, the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, etc., but not even once did I hear the hon. members of the Bloc speak of the 1980 referendum. There was a referendum in 1980 on the issue of sovereignty and people—

Sorry. It seems someone did talk about it. Well done! Unfortunately, I was out of the House at the time.

In 1980, Quebec's sovereignty-association with Canada was proposed and the people said no. Now, we are in favour of this type of consultation. We say to the Quebec government: Ask the question! If the answer is yes, go on with the process you have started this week! What is undemocratic and what you refuse to acknowledge is that you have skipped the most important step.

There was an election in Quebec and this issue was raised during the election campaign. As you will remember, your leader corrected Mr. Parizeau on this, during the big meeting held in Joliette. He was speaking of the Parti Québécois's strategy because nothing was being done. He would not introduce a bill in the National Assembly without holding a referendum first. And now he tables a draft bill in the National Assembly and once this bill has been voted on, there will be a referendum.

No, that cannot be. First, they must get a mandate from the people. They must ask Quebecers if they want to secede or not. Can you honestly answer this question today? Do Quebecers really want to secede or not? Do you have the mandate? That is the question. We do not think you have that mandate.

Ask the question and if the answer is yes in the referendum, you may then initiate—and I use the word on advisedly—the process announced this week by the Quebec government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hon. member for Terrebonne has 30 seconds for questions or comments.

(1325)

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would have a question to ask the hon. member on the subject of democracy. I would like to know if he can comment on this quote from page 181 of the book *Straight from the Heart*: "The voice of Chief Justice Bora Laskin wasn't the only thing that wasn't clear; the majority judgment itself seemed rather ambiguous. It stated that the unilateral action of the federal government was legal but offensive to the traditional convention of getting provincial consent for constitutional amendments." Did my hon. colleague participate in that action?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hon. member has just 15 seconds.

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, I think that the hon. member is confusing apples and oranges.

Some hon. members: No, no.

Mr. Gagliano: It is simple. Why do you not have the courage to ask the question? Ask the question!

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to inform the House that members of the government will divide their speaking time.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak to the following Bloc motion:

That this House enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec in order to allow Quebecers to chart their own political and constitutional future.

In so doing, let me be clear that I will be opposing the motion as I believe will be every member of the Reform Party. The motion is truly a test of our commitment to federalism in the most fundamental sense.

The motion talks about a democratic process. Is this a democratic process? The hon. member for Calgary Southwest, the leader of the Reform Party, has spoken on this point earlier. I will repeat some of his points but let me be emphatic in saying it is essential to say those things.

We are talking about a referendum. That is democratic. Before a referendum the bill proclaiming sovereignty or laying out sovereignty will be passed. It will be passed by a government elected by a separatist minority. It will be developed in stages which predefine a separatist outcome in a process completely dominated by separatists and restricted by separatist

options. The question to be asked will be lengthy. It concerns a whole bill. It will contain ambiguities and outright falsehoods.

The PQ government running this process has a very clear interpretation of the results. A yes counts; it is binding. As the leader of the Reform Party said, it is binding on those large unresolved items in the question. A no does not count. A no means we will just try again—some democracy.

The key of legitimacy is whether something is legal. This assumes that only the Quebec assembly, for this particular bill we are discussing, has sole jurisdictions in areas where it clearly does not. Articles 1, 10 and 13 reserve all powers now part of the Canadian state that require the consent of this Parliament to change and in many cases provincial legislatures strictly to the Government of Quebec.

Article 4 would allow the province to alter boundaries. It says it is not altering boundaries but it is a significant alteration to declare interprovincial boundaries to be international boundaries. Under our constitutional law that is a significant alteration.

Article 5 would authorize the Government of Quebec to pass laws regarding the use of Canadian citizenship.

Articles 7, 8 and 9 authorize the ascension of Quebec to Canadian interests and Canadian treaties, which are not just the business of this Parliament but also of our treaty partners, our internationally recognized fellow nations.

Article 11 authorizes the Government of Quebec to pay pension plans which are clearly under the jurisdiction of this Parliament and the Constitution, in some cases constitutional amendments that have been arrived at unanimously.

Article 12 would strip the Supreme Court of Canada and all other Canadian courts of their judicial authority to hear cases related to law. Article 16 would bypass all the legal amending procedures of the Constitution of Canada.

(1330)

[*Translation*]

When I talk about legitimacy, I must say that, in my life, legitimacy has two parts: a political project and a political relationship. The first element is the democratic process, which is mentioned in today's motion. It is not a true democratic process, but there will be a vote, and the result of a vote cannot be ignored. I think this is important.

It will be a historic vote, and I hope it will be the beginning of an irreversible process if the result is yes or, more likely, no.

Supply

Legitimacy is made up of two other elements which are not mentioned in this motion. First, the interests of others in the political project or relationship. Their economic, fiscal, political, constitutional, social and international interests, as well as their preferences. This does not only apply outside Quebec. There are also the interests of foreign countries, of the Parliament of Canada, of other provinces and even those of hard core federalists in Quebec, in short, anyone who has the right to stay in Canada.

Second, and perhaps more important, there are the rights established by existing political and legal relationships, such as the treaties, laws, constitutions and powers of other governments here in Canada and in other countries. Our words should not be misinterpreted. It is not merely a wish, it is more than that. It is the duty of the Parliament of Canada, of the members of this House, whether they represent the Reform Party or another federalist party, to protect the interests and the legal rights of Canadians. Rights that are recognized by the international community, legal and necessary rights that all Canadians enjoy, in Quebec as in all other provinces.

The legitimacy of a unilateral process like the one proposed by the Parti Québécois in Quebec cannot be recognized. I am not a Quebecer nor do I pretend to be one, but if I were, I would be proud to be a Quebecer, proud of my history, of my language and of my society, just as I am proud to be an Albertan. It is a choice I have made, not only as my province of residence, but also as a way of life, a vision.

I can understand Quebec's nationalistic policy which, like all nationalistic policies, has to lead to independence. I can understand this feeling, but I cannot share it.

We have to recognize that, in today's world, nationalism has its obligations just as it has its dreams. No group, no continent, no country, nobody can ignore the legitimate interests of others, but that is what the Parti Québécois and its allies from the Bloc want to do.

This is nothing to be proud of. I think it is a shame and I sincerely hope for the benefit of Canada that the vast majority of Quebecers will recognize the irresponsible and dangerous nature of the unilateral process proposed by the government of Quebec.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened very intently to the member's dissertation. I am surprised in some real ways that the Reform Party has in a sense fallen into the trap of discussing a hypothetical case of the separation of the province of Quebec. What I do believe we should be doing is not being part of that program. What I would like to ask the member concerns some real issues that do occur and exist today in the province of Quebec.

Supply

(1335)

Quebec has a massive per capita debt, a provincially formulated debt of over \$9,400 for every man, woman and child in that province. Quebec's deficit is financed 40 per cent outside not only its borders but also the borders of Canada. Could the member reflect on what this debate is going to do and what it is going to cost the people of Quebec?

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I would like to say a couple of things relative to that.

First, obviously this debate and the economic uncertainty that all this will cause will probably lead to no change whatsoever and is already costing us a great deal. It will cost Quebecers in terms of their bonds which already have a tremendous risk premium on the international market as well as the bonds of Canada which are affected indirectly. All of this uncertainty has cost us.

We know the cost it has caused Quebec over the past generation. When I was a boy, and it was not that long ago, Montreal was the major city in Canada. Today that is not true; it is Toronto. A lot of that is thanks to these developments that have occurred in the province of Quebec and this particular separatist debate.

I should be clear that in no way excuses the lack of action on the fiscal situation at the federal level. That is just as serious for Quebecers and for other Canadians and has also impacted negatively on the Government of Quebec.

Second, the member says that we are raising hypothetical scenarios. My speech and the speech of the leader of the Reform Party today were not on the hypothetical issues of separation, but on the real issue of the separatist process that is now under way in Quebec and which is the subject of this motion.

One cannot ignore the sentiments that exist in Quebec or ignore the process that is actually under way. That process is extremely dangerous and misleading. It affects the vital interests of this Parliament that is the responsibility of not only all members here but our responsibility to Canadians. We should be defending those interests much more than we are doing and defending the legal rights of the people we represent to not see this kind of a process go ahead without our participation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to know, even though we cannot put a question to the previous speaker rather than to the hon. member for Calgary West, first, what is the national debt per capita, and second, what percentage of that debt is in foreign hands? He will surely have an opportunity to answer those questions when he speaks next.

Instead, I will direct my question to the hon. member for Calgary West, whom I congratulate for his French and for his relatively good understanding of the position of Quebec up till now. For my part, I do understand his position. He speaks clearly.

However, when the Liberal members or the Reform members talk about the legitimacy of the process initiated, I would tell you that in a democratic system, everyone can legitimately consult everyone else and have his say. Our draft bill will only be accepted once a referendum, where everybody in Quebec will have the opportunity to vote for or against it, has been held.

As far as legitimacy is concerned, I would like to remind my hon. colleague of a few processes that we have witnessed in this House and that were not exactly models of legitimacy. When the current Prime Minister of Canada was Minister of Justice and was taking an active part in the unilateral patriation of the Constitution, he said, and I quote from *Le Droit* of November 2, 1981: "The intent of my government is to move ahead with the patriation of the Constitution; and even if there is no agreement with the provinces, we will do it". Even without an agreement with the provinces: talk about a model of democracy!

Moreover, I recall that the Supreme Court had ruled that, all in all, this was legal but unconstitutional. So, I would like to ask the hon. member for Calgary West what he really thinks about it. Does he really believe it is undemocratic, in a so-called democratic system, to consult people about a social vision? I remind him that the majority of the members from Quebec in the House of Commons are sovereignists and the majority of members in the Quebec National Assembly are sovereignists, and people know it.

(1340)

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, my answer is that we have to consult the people of Quebec, federalists as well as sovereignists, and people from outside Quebec too, I think. But we must have a real consultation process where the result is not predetermined and where all the available options are discussed. That is not the case in this process.

I would also like to talk about the repatriation of the Constitution in 1981. Someone said today that that process was undemocratic. Clearly, we do not have enough democracy in Canada today. Every day, Reformers call for direct democracy mechanisms. It is a necessity. However, under the law, the Supreme Court decided that patriation was legitimate. This question was put to the Supreme Court. Obviously, it would not have been legal or constitutional to decide to ignore all the provinces. But, in effect, a strong majority of provinces and their legislatures supported that constitutional amendment.

Supply

A government here, dominated by Quebec and the Prime Minister from Quebec decided to adopt that Constitution. Indeed, Quebec did not have a veto then, and still does not have one. And why not? We know why. It is because Mr. Lévesque, before the decision, had renounced his veto in an accord signed with the other provinces. This explains the process by which the Constitution was adopted in 1981.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a comment. The reason we have a consultation process is that we want to avoid being blamed for not consulting. Had we asked Quebecers whether they want sovereignty without telling them what it means, we would have been blamed because we had presented an option without spelling out its meaning. In order to avoid being blamed, and rightly so, for such action, the Quebec government decided to explain its proposal, and to give the people an opportunity to amend it. Once people know what they are voting for, they will decide through a democratic referendum whether they are ready to take one last step and say yes to Quebec sovereignty, with full knowledge of the facts.

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, on this issue, I am in full agreement with the Prime Minister and my leader. The question that should be asked of Quebecers is this: "Do you want Quebec to separate from Canada?" There are two aspects to that question. The first one is the desire to separate. But a desire is just that, a desire. All details would have to be negotiated afterwards. You cannot table a bill setting forth these details in the National Assembly, because it is outside its constitutional jurisdiction. The second aspect is separation. We know why the P.Q. government prefers the word sovereignty. We have seen the polls. To Quebecers, sovereignty appears less dangerous, less clearly defined. That is why that word is used instead of the real one.

(1345)

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I begin by saying how extremely disappointed I am with my friends in the Parti Québécois government in Quebec and their Bloc Quebec allies here in Ottawa. I say friends because while I disagree with their main political option, I have always respected them as reasonable and honest men and women.

I expected the Parti Québécois government would proceed with the referendum on independence but certainly not in this undemocratic manner. Both the proposal that was announced in the Quebec National Assembly the other day and the process are contrary to the democratic principles usually followed not only in Quebec and in Canada but throughout the western world.

The process and the proposition are undemocratic on four grounds. First, the law is being tabled and passed first and then the consultation comes afterward. In other words they are

putting the cart before the horse. That is certainly not what is usually done. It is not what we did in this Parliament when amending the law on the goods and services tax. We commissioned a committee which held wide ranging hearings, travelled the country and collected views. Now the government is preparing a law.

We are doing the same thing with the reform of our social security laws. We did the same thing with respect to defence and external affairs. Very important changes are being made to our policies and our laws but first we consult and bring in the law afterward.

Second, the Parti Québécois government did not get a mandate from the electorate of Quebec in the last election to put forward such a law. It only got approximately 44 per cent of the vote and many of those who voted for the Parti Québécois voted for them in order to have a change of government.

There are two principal parties in Quebec: the provincial Liberal Party and the Parti Québécois. Many people were dissatisfied with the Liberal Party and voted for the Parti Québécois for a better way of governing. That was the slogan that was on the signs: "For a better way of governing", to deal with economic and social problems.

Even among the 44 per cent that did vote for the Parti Québécois many voted for a better way of government and not for the law that was tabled in the National Assembly the other day. It is true that during the election campaign Mr. Parizeau spoke about a referendum but he certainly did not speak of a referendum that would be preceded by a unilateral declaration of independence.

Third, in discussing the non-democratic nature of these proposals, the regional commissions that the Quebec government intends to set up are loaded in favour of the law and the principles behind the law. The premier of Quebec has invited MNAs from the Quebec National Assembly and members of Parliament to participate in the commissions. Added to those commissions will be other members who will be appointed by the Government of Quebec and favourable to its position. The chairs of those regional commissions will be persons who will not be elected members of Parliament or MNAs but, and I am referring to the words of Mr. Parizeau: "will be people who will be able to build consensus" toward the proposal that he tabled in the assembly.

In other words the goal of the chair or those regional commissions will be to build consensus toward the principle of a unilaterally independent state of Quebec.

The dice are loaded with respect to those regional commissions. They are undemocratic. That is why many groups, not just political parties, will not participate in the regional commissions. Their goal is simply to improve on, to build on, what has already been tabled in the Quebec National Assembly as a draft bill.

Supply

(1350)

Fourth, the process is dishonest and misleading because it pretends to keep the best of both Canada and Quebec. It is a bit like the sovereignty association question in the last referendum in the early 1980s. For example, the draft bill provides for economic union with Canada, for keeping Canadian citizenship, for keeping the Canadian dollar, for maintaining Quebec's position in NAFTA and in NATO, for maintaining Canadian pensions and for maintaining the same territory which Quebec now has, but which it did not have at the time of Confederation.

It is a sort of having one's cake and eating it too, getting out of Canada but remaining in Canada. On those grounds as well the process is undemocratic, confusing and misleading for the ordinary voter and the ordinary citizen of Quebec.

The opening clause of the draft constitution states that Quebec is a sovereign country. That is a universal declaration of independence in the sense that it refers to an entire country. It is misleading for the people of Quebec because all provinces are now sovereign in provincial areas of jurisdiction. It was decided by the Privy Council many years ago that all provinces were sovereign in their areas of jurisdiction just as the federal government is sovereign in its area of jurisdiction.

I want to say a few words about the legality of this process. There is no provision in either the Constitution of 1867 or the Constitution of 1982 for any province to secede unilaterally. No province has that right legally. They no more have that right than would the federal government have the right to expel unilaterally a province from Canada.

Can one imagine if we passed a law in this Parliament and confirmed by the Senate to throw Quebec out or Prince Edward Island or British Columbia out, without going through the process of our amending formula. It would be considered outrageous if we even attempted to do that. Even if the federal government should try to do it with the support of a few other provinces it is unacceptable.

It is unacceptable that any province should leave unilaterally without the agreement of the other provinces because we have come to share so much together. If it requires an amendment of the Constitution to transfer a number of powers from the federal government to a provincial government—let us say to transfer manpower training or pensions or unemployment insurance or other things—then certainly it requires amendments to transfer all of the powers.

There are various views on this, but I would say at the very most for a province to secede it would require the amending formula which states that you need seven out of ten provinces, representing 50 per cent of the population in order to make such an extreme amendment to the Constitution. But at the very least,

it would require the consent of the province in question and of the federal Parliament.

Some people would say that we should not talk about the legalities of secession, we should talk about the politics of it. Even politically and morally, the present government of Quebec has no political or moral mandate to introduce and pass the type of law which they tabled in the National Assembly the other day. They got only a little over 44 per cent of the vote and even then all those who voted for them did not support that option.

I understand my time is up. I had much more to say on this subject. However, we should reject this motion before the House today. We should certainly reject the bill that is in the Quebec National Assembly at the present time.

(1355)

I would recommend again to my friends, whom I respect, that they go back to the drawing boards and come up with something that is more suitable, in accordance with our democratic process and then we can all decide it in a proper way.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak in this debate. In fact, I would urge all my constituents in Québec-Est, the riding I represent, to take part in the consultation process initiated by the Government of Quebec which, I would like to point out to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, is an entirely democratic process.

I think we can say that never in Quebec's history has there been a more democratic and more open process to consult Quebecers to find out what they really want. I must say I do not appreciate the use of the word "immoral" by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in referring to the process initiated by the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Duceppe: He should talk about the War Measures Act.

Mr. Marchand: To imply that this is immoral is an insult to the intelligence of the members of this House.

What is immoral about wanting to consult and wanting to know what Quebecers want, what is wanted by people who have been deceived and whose rights have been violated for over a century? How can the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce say that this process has no legitimacy or is unlawful, when this Parliament has for years violated its own Constitution? It has shown no respect for its own Constitution or for the rights of the provinces.

The trouble with Canada was that the federal government failed to respect the rights of the provinces. If at the federal level in Ottawa, we had at least respected our own Constitution, perhaps we would not have the problems we have today, and I am referring to this failure to respect the rights of the provinces and the rights of francophones outside Quebec. Did anyone mention this? Can anyone in this House say that their rights have

not been violated by this Constitution? What about the lack of political will on the part of the federal Liberals, which has been going on for some time, to make Canada's provinces abide by the Constitution?

What I find particularly galling is that the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who is a member from Quebec, did not say a single word in French in his speech. Is it too much to expect of a member of Parliament for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce to speak French when dealing with a matter of such importance, and I am referring to the sovereignty of Quebec?

I also want to say it is unrealistic to consider a third option, as the Reform Party did earlier, it is unrealistic to consider a third option when we realize that since 1980, every possible avenue has been explored to find an alternative to sovereignty and all attempts in this respect have been unsuccessful.

The Speaker: Dear colleague, I believe that you have about a minute left. You may continue after Question Period, if you wish.

[English]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I will have an opportunity to respond to that question?

The Speaker: Yes, you will have an opportunity to respond to the question after question period. As it is now two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

(1400)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of joining the hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at a special citizenship and reaffirmation ceremony presided over by Dr. John Brooks, a member of the Order of Canada.

I congratulate the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Queen Victoria Public School Children's Choir and all the volunteers for putting on such a splendid, well-organized event.

As I was congratulating the new citizens, one individual thanked me for coming and whispered to me: "God bless Canada and please do whatever you can to keep it together".

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I was deeply moved by his words. As the son of an immigrant I would like today to echo his words in this honourable House. God bless Canada. I would also like to assure this new Canadian and all Canadians that this government, this party, will work relentlessly to make our country proud, prosperous and above all, united.

* * *

[Translation]

REFERENDUM ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec sovereignty issue is again at the centre of debate.

In the 1980 referendum campaign, Prime Minister Trudeau said that a "no" to the referendum meant a "yes" to renewed federalism. We know the rest: exclusion of Quebec from the Canadian Constitution, failure of Meech Lake, failure of Charlottetown.

This time, federalist leaders promise a "flexible federalism", at the same time we learn that the federal government refuses to pay \$282 million in transfer payments owed to the Quebec Treasury.

The rest of Canada no longer wants to hear about the legitimate demands of Quebec. As for Quebecers, they have had enough of the status quo. The positions are clear. Why the false pretences? Quebecers will soon have to choose between sovereignty and fossilized federalism. We are confident of the outcome.

* * *

[English]

OKANAGAN WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute an industry which has risen from the ashes to become a world leader. I refer to the Okanagan's flourishing wine industry. Today any respectable wine cellar is incomplete without a selection of the very fine vintages coming from the Okanagan Valley.

Among our world class estate wines we include Le Compte Wines, Sumac Ridge, Lang Vinyards, Wild Goose Vinyards and Gehringer Brothers. All have won an impressive collection of international medals for their wines. Many of these wines have been judged the best in the world at competitions such as the Intervin International in New York and the International Wine and Spirit Competition held in London, England.

In the south Okanagan estate wineries flourished with government subsidies but have flourished without government subsidies and government interference. Free enterprise and competition nurtures excellence. There is an important lesson in

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the Okanagan wine industry. I salute the entrepreneurs of the Okanagan wine industry and the people of the Okanagan. Indeed all Canadians are justly proud of you.

* * *

JOANNE DAVE

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to my dedicated executive assistant, Joanne Dave, who passed away last week. She died after suffering severe head injuries in a car accident.

Joanne was a devoted assistant who never accepted an adverse response to a constituent query. She was so dedicated to her job that she would not stop until she got the best possible result for any constituent. She was much more than a highly competent employee; she was also a friend for many years and was always there to assist me in every matter.

Many members in this House who have met Joanne through her work will concur with me about everything I have stated. To her husband Pankaj, her three children Shilpa, Neha and little Chiku, I offer my deepest sympathy. She will be remembered fondly by all who have known her.

* * *

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that members on both sides of this House welcome the news that the Bosnian Serb army has now released 55 Canadian peacekeepers detained in the Bosnian town of Ilijas.

If these brave men and women are listening today, I want them to know that Canadians are very proud of the important work being done in this shattered region. We know very well this war could have claimed thousands of lives more if it were not for the Canadian peacekeepers.

We also know the war lords in this conflict would love the UN to pull out of the former Yugoslavia. Canadians are not quitters. We will not carelessly abandon innocent civilians at their moment of greatest need. I ask that all members join me in this salute to the brave Canadians serving in the UN peacekeeping operations.

(1405)

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and Radio Canada International for your assistance in getting this message to our peacekeepers serving around the globe.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada moves into the 21st century no field of endeavour is more vital to our continued success as a nation than education.

I would like to recognize the efforts of Canada's teachers throughout our nation at all levels of education. Their vital role in preparing young Canadians to become full active citizens should never be underestimated.

There is an appreciation from most Canadian students and their families of this reality. Today I am pleased to welcome to Ottawa from my riding of London—Middlesex staff and students of Regina Mundi College where I taught at one time. They are a good example of the very important interest that our educators and our youth have in the future of this our great Canada.

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THE LATE JACK ELLIS

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late Jack Ellis, member of Parliament for Prince Edward—Hastings from 1972 to 1988.

On Thursday, December 1, Jack Ellis died of a sudden heart attack at his home in Prince Edward County in Ontario. Those of us who knew him as a friend and colleague will know that Jack's public career was one of selfless commitment and fierce pride in his work. His sudden death will leave our community with a profound sense of loss as to the tremendous potential for further service which has been left unfulfilled.

In the Quinte area Jack was a longstanding public figure with a tremendous record of success. Following his retirement as member of Parliament for Prince Edward—Hastings he continued to work tirelessly on some of his favourite community oriented projects and was always a strong voice representing the interests of a region.

Only his commitment to family and his loyalty to his friends had the potential to surpass his devotion to public service. In this sense he was a complete professional with the values that are treasured the most in political life.

There will be a memorial service for Jack tomorrow in Belleville. I know that all members of this House will join with me in extending our most sincere sympathies to Jack's wife Wally, his children, family and friends on their sudden and unfortunate loss.

* * *

*[Translation]***SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM**

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec university presidents announced that they will not participate in federal hearings on social program reform. Denouncing the federal project, they said that they agreed with the Government of Quebec, that education was strictly a provincial matter.

S. O. 31

Unanimously, Quebec university students opposed the federal reform. They condemned it saying, and I quote: "When they choose a country, students will remember that the federal government increased their tuition fees and their debt load against the will of Quebec".

Yesterday, the National Council of Welfare denounced the federal proposal to create two classes of unemployed, and urged the government not to widen any further the gap between rich and poor.

The Bloc Quebecois demands that the minister go back to the drawing board. He said the reform was prompted by public opinion. Yes, Quebecers and Canadian want a reform, but not the one he proposes.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the justice minister plans to force legal gun owners to register their firearms with the federal government. The majority of constituents in my riding of Cariboo—Chilcotin are strongly opposed to this plan.

Canadians have told this justice minister many times that a gun registry will not work. Legal gun owners have been very responsible in the care, use and storage of their firearms. One constituent of mine, John Ross of 100 Mile House, said: "Past governments have made much ado about the gun control legislation they have passed. In reality, they have only placed additional responsibilities and restrictions on the honest, responsible gun owners".

All a gun registry will do is frustrate legal gun owners and swell the government bureaucracy while leaving criminals untouched.

I call on all Canadians who are against registration and the other unnecessary proposals to write to the justice minister at the House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6, no stamp required.

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HIGHWAYS

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the government to give serious consideration to increasing support to our national highway system.

Currently of the \$5 billion collected as federal fuel tax only about 10 per cent of the revenue is invested in the Canadian highway system. This is simply not enough. More than a third of the 24,000 kilometre national highway system in Canada does not meet minimum standards. Ensuring that the national highway system meets the standards established by the Minister of Transport would result in the creation of 200,000 direct

construction jobs as well as a number of secondary benefits for those industries which rely on the road system like tourism and transportation.

(1410)

Not only will there be economic advantages, I believe the revitalization of our transportation infrastructure will also result in reduced highway fatalities, loss and damage to property, as well as reducing congestion and lowering vehicle operating costs not only in my riding but in ridings across the country.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I urge this House to support the renewal of the national highway system in Canada.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Saturday, December 10 is World Human Rights Day.

[Translation]

As Canadians, we can be proud of our contribution to the international community on the issue of human rights and on the development of international standards to which we adhere.

[English]

This said, we must also be ever vigilant that our human rights respect international standards and ensure the right of all Canadians to live free from discrimination in this country.

A recent decision of the United Nations human rights committee ruled that sexual orientation is protected by the equality guarantees of the international covenant on civil and political rights, a document which Canada helped prepare and which binds us.

Let us in remembering World Human Rights Day recognize that it is our duty to ensure that our laws in this country are amended to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including any based on sexual orientation.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Standing Committee on Finance tabled its report on the first ever pre-budget consultations. As a member of that committee I could comment on several aspects of the report. But as the sole female member I feel compelled to highlight the necessity of understanding the gender impact of budgetary measures.

We recommended a 12 per cent cut in government operations, but will we ensure that the positive impact of employment equity initiatives will not be lost as we pare down our public service? We suggested a 10 per cent reduction in international aid, but will we be sure that our women in development programs are not disproportionately cut?

Oral Questions

There are those who say this strategy is too expensive, but I say the government must take the initiative and ensure that systemic discrimination is not perpetuated nor created. We insist on this in the private sector through employment equity legislation. We can expect no less from our government.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great relief that we learned this morning that the 55 Canadian peacekeepers taken hostage by Bosnian Serb forces two weeks ago had been released. However, we are still extremely concerned about the eventual pull-out of all peacekeepers from Bosnia, at a time when NATO is speeding up preparations for such a move.

If the humiliation the Bosnian Serb forces are inflicting on the international community were to lead to the withdrawal of peacekeepers from Bosnia, it is quite certain that we will face a significant upsurge in fighting. Consequently, we have every reason to fear the impact of such a decision on the Bosnian civilian population which would be completely left to its fate. It is high time for Canada to show leadership and push for the United Nations to be reformed as quickly as possible in order to recover the credibility the UN lost in this horrible conflict.

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[English]

FOREIGN AID

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this House will be asked to vote later today on \$1,143,285,750 worth of spending. Five hundred and twenty-seven million dollars of this spending is to help reduce the debts of heavily indebted countries because of multilateral agreements Canada undertook in the past.

Some of these heavily indebted countries are much less indebted than Canada yet Canadian taxpayers are asked to relieve their debts. This is absolutely insane.

I call upon the Minister of Finance to commit to this House that such ludicrous agreements will not be undertaken in the future. Furthermore, will the Minister of Finance abide by the motion passed by the Standing Committee on Finance on December 1 which states that any agreement to relieve the debt burden of other countries is studied by the finance committee prior to the government making any such commitment?

[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, consultations undertaken by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, following the minister's tabling of his discussion paper entitled "Improving Social Security in Canada", are being held in Quebec this week.

(1415)

We learned recently that the Conseil du patronat du Québec had polled its members on the best way to finance post-secondary education. The results of this consultation are published in the December issue of the CPQ newsletter.

We learn that almost three respondents out of four, 74 per cent to be more exact, believe that the federal government should fund students directly through loans and bursaries. This is yet another proof that the social program reform launched by our government truly meets the expectations and aspirations of the population.

* * *

[English]

RONALD EDWARD ARMSTRONG

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the late Reverend Ronald Edward Armstrong of Windermere in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Reverend Armstrong was killed in a tragic plane crash recently, bringing to an end a life dedicated to the service of others. Besides his work at several parishes in Ontario during the past 30 years, Reverend Armstrong will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to the people on the Island of Bequia, St. Vincent and other Grenadine Islands.

Reverend Armstrong, who founded and directed the Bequia Mission, was instrumental in establishing a school for handicapped children and adults, a workshop for the handicapped and he arranged for the sponsorship of underprivileged children so they could attend school.

Reverend Armstrong was a great humanitarian and a great Canadian. We all share the loss with his wife June, four children and grandchildren.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

DRAFT BILL ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in the same disarray as the speakers for the federalist cause,

the Prime Minister tried to minimize the consultation process announced by the Government of Quebec and at the same time confirmed that he did not intend to participate in it. He also mentioned the possibility of the federal government holding a Canada-wide referendum on Quebec's constitutional future.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does he admit that holding a Canada-wide referendum on Quebec's constitutional future means denying Quebecers the right to decide their own future for themselves?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want only one thing: a referendum as soon as possible in Quebec, under Quebec's Referendum Act, where they will not play tricks but be honest with the people and ask Quebecers whether or not they want to separate from Canada.

If they do that, we will solve the problem quickly and no longer hear about it. I hope that instead of the unnecessary complications which the Bloc members are now raising, we will take the question seriously and stop talking about the Constitution and separation and all work together on creating jobs and economic growth, which is what Quebecers want above all.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does the Prime Minister reconcile what his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said about the possibility of flexible federalism with his own statement refusing any constitutional reform?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not very complicated. Right now, the Minister of Human Resources Development is making a fundamental reform in Canada without changing the Constitution. That is what we want: fundamental reforms.

Enough time has been wasted consulting people for years. We wasted seven years discussing constitutional changes and ended up with exactly the same situation and the federal system we have today. It was wonderful to see Mr. Parizeau say in his statement how we have advanced in Canada. He was talking about the progress Quebec made within the Canadian federation. Why change that? If we could do so well, we will continue to do even better by remaining in the best country in the world, Canada.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone will have understood what the Prime Minister means by flexible federalism: the provinces bend and the federal government invades their jurisdiction.

(1420)

How can the Prime Minister be indignant and get all hot under the collar about the \$2 million which Quebec will spend on consulting its citizens when his own government is getting ready to spend \$35 million on tourism advertising to promote his

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beautiful Canada, \$7 million more for promoting Canadian unity and \$6 million more for the Privy Council and its federal strategy on the referendum?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is absolutely outrageous in the Parti Québécois's proposal now is that they want to create 15 "yes" committees financed by the state. They proposed having 15 committee members, of whom 13 would be appointed by the party in power and two by the opposition parties. Since they are not confident in their cause, they want the PQ campaign to promote their cause in their ridings to be paid for by the taxpayers of Quebec.

We will go to Quebec and make speeches and it will not be paid for by the taxpayers of Canada. We will tell Quebecers that we do not want trickery; we want the truth, a clear, short, unambiguous question: Do you, in Quebec, want to separate from Canada, yes or no? It is as simple as that.

* * *

INCOME TAX

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after wasting one year in the fight against the deficit, the Liberals now propose, in a report to the Minister of Finance, to increase the tax burden of all taxpayers by imposing a temporary surtax which could bring in over one billion dollars, to be used to reduce the deficit. By the way, the last temporary tax was the income tax of 1914, which has now been in effect for 80 years.

Will the Prime Minister pledge to reject the proposal made by his members to impose a surtax which would be in direct contradiction with his own election promise not to increase the tax burden of Canadians during the first two years of his mandate?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the committee travelled across the country. It then made recommendations to the Minister of Finance who will review them. When the minister tables his budget in February, we will see which of these recommendations he intends to follow. The remarkable thing about the Bloc members who sat on that committee is that they could not make a single specific recommendation. They shied away from their responsibility to make decisions and recommendations. They speak eloquently, but they do not have the courage to take a clear stand.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only does the Minister of Finance not read his letters before signing them, but the Prime Minister does not read the documents tabled by the Official Opposition. If he did, he would know that we made ten specific proposals to implement real streamlining and saving measures to improve the government's finances. I am not talking about measures which would

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hurt the unemployed and the poor, but about real saving and streamlining initiatives.

How can the Prime Minister, or his government, consider imposing such a surtax on Canadians who honestly pay their taxes, when this government has yet to act, or even show the political will to recover over \$6 billion dollars in unpaid taxes from the wealthiest Canadians? Is this his definition of justice? Is this his definition of fairness?

[English]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we said that we will reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GDP by the end of the third year of our mandate and we will do it.

He can make all the speeches he wants. We have a clear program. It is well documented, it will be met and it will be realized. He will see that we can do it.

* * *

QUEBEC

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's reaction to Premier Parizeau's draft bill on Quebec sovereignty has been unfocused and even confusing.

The Prime Minister is quoted as saying his strategy is to win the referendum battle but he does not say which referendum, having dismissed Mr. Parizeau's referendum plan. The government seems very reluctant to comment on the illegality or legality of what is proposed or to point out specific flaws in the Parizeau plan.

(1425)

Section 5 of the draft sovereignty bill states Quebec citizenship may be held concurrently with citizenship of Canada or any other country.

Does the Prime Minister accept this position, yes or no? If he does not, why does he not say so?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has not listened to me a lot over the years. I have always said that they cannot impose a situation unilaterally. Citizenship of Canada will be determined by the Parliament of Canada not by the Parliament of Quebec.

Mr. Parizeau's proposition is funny. He wants to keep all the good things that Canada has provided for Quebec. Quebec should stay in Canada. That is my answer. I am from Quebec and whenever I travel around Canada I am comfortable in every part of the country.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Prime Minister's answer. We had trouble getting that type of answer yesterday and the day before.

The Quebec government has also stated that in the event of a vote for sovereignty in the upcoming referendum, an economic

association with Canada would be maintained. Again, the statement is completely presumptuous, without regard for the position which the government and the people of Canada might take on such an association.

Does the Prime Minister concur with the position that an automatic economic association between Canada and a separate Quebec should be assumed? If he does not, why does he not say so?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not a big problem. It is evident that the people and the Government of Canada will decide. For example, the PQ wants to keep the Canadian currency. Monetary policies will be decided by this Parliament and it will have absolutely no voice. Nobody will be able to get up here and ask the Minister of Finance what is right or wrong with the monetary policies of Canada.

Of course certain countries have used the currency of other countries. Not long ago I discussed that with some French African countries that depend on the franc. When Paris decided to lower the value of the franc used in Africa, it had nothing to say, it just paid the price.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for the first time in a year I actually think we are making progress in Question Period.

Section 7 of the proposed sovereignty bill states Quebec shall assume the obligations and enjoy the rights arising out of treaties to which Canada is party. This statement is not only presumptuous but also clearly unconstitutional.

The federal government has the sole role to negotiate and sign international treaties and many have their own provisions for who joins those treaties.

Is not section 7 of the proposed sovereignty act beyond the power of the Quebec government? If it is, should not the federal government say so now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to debate what is in this project of law. We can have a long debate on that. The question is a very simple one.

They should have the honesty to ask the Quebec people first: "Do you want to separate, yes or no?". To play games like that will lead nowhere. It is just a sign that they are afraid to be honest with the people and ask a very simple question: "Do you want to separate from Canada, yes or no?".

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[Translation]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Despite a healthier economy and rising tax revenues, the federal government, like the

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previous Conservative government, is preparing to add to the tax burden of all Canadians, because it has shown itself totally unable to reduce federal spending, to eliminate unjustified tax privileges like the ones for family trusts and to take whatever measures are needed to collect more than \$6 billion in unpaid taxes.

(1430)

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that, instead of introducing a surtax that could jeopardize the economic recovery, he should have the courage to end duplication, waste and inequities in the tax system?

[English]

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I would like to thank the committee and its chairman, the member for Willowdale, for the excellent work done this fall on reviewing the budget.

All members of the committee worked very hard hearing the representations from Canadians. All three parties made an effort to put forward their own ideas. On behalf of the minister, I would like to also thank the other two parties for putting forward their ideas.

The Minister of Finance has made it quite clear that during this process we will not be commenting on any specific proposals from any sources. We will just simply continue our consultation process until the budget is announced in February.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

Does the Prime Minister acknowledge that, by recommending cuts of \$3.4 billion in social programs, government members on the finance committee are confirming the government's shameful objective of reducing the deficit at the expense of the unemployed, welfare recipients and students?

[English]

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition knows full well that under the leadership of the Minister of Human Resources Development that the process of consulting with Canadians continues. The government will make a decision in the coming year as to how to deal with each of the items in the budget.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the finance committee report recommends increased

taxes on gasoline, lottery winnings and corporations. Most incredibly, it suggests increasing taxes on income.

Canadians told the committee clearly that they do not want higher taxes. They are taxed to the max. They want smaller government. Reform's proposals show that the deficit can be eliminated by spending cuts alone.

Is the government going to accept the recommendations of its finance committee and increase taxes, yes or no?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows as he participated in many of these meetings that we heard a variety of opinions from Canadians concerned about the government, taxes and about the integrity of our programs. The Minister of Finance will take these into account as he makes up his mind.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today Stats Canada noted that during the last 23 years Canadians' taxes increased nearly 50 per cent while their income remained constant. Now there is the prospect of even higher taxes on gasoline and lottery winnings. The Liberal credo seems to be: If Canadians like it, tax it.

Is the minister seriously planning to raise taxes on the use of cars and the dreams Canadians buy with their lottery tickets?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member is a great fan of Stats Canada he should be quoting the tremendous rate of economic growth in this country under the leadership of this government.

The member will know full well that everyone is concerned about the high level of taxation for Canadian families, just as we are with the integrity of all of our programs.

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*[Translation]***PEARSON AIRPORT**

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. According to the *Globe and Mail*, in 1990, while he was practising law, the Prime Minister advised the Matthews Group, a partner in the Pearson Development Corporation, on the privatization of Pearson Airport. This consortium is now demanding \$440 million in compensation for the cancellation of the airport privatization contract.

Considering his previous professional relations with the Matthews Group, a partner in the Pearson Development Corporation, can the Prime Minister confirm that he has not taken part, since he was elected, in any Cabinet decision concerning the Pearson Airport nor been involved in any way in this issue, so as to avoid any apparent conflict of interest?

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(1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no issue on that group.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is the assurance of the Prime Minister worth, since Bill C-22 proposes a discretionary process to provide compensation for the cancellation of the Pearson Airport contract, which could benefit the Matthews Group he advised as a lawyer?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, never as a lawyer, did I have any discussions about Toronto Airport with any of these people. Besides, I am the one who proposed cancelling this project. Not only is there no conflict of interest, but I am the one who axed the whole thing.

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*[English]***BOSNIA**

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party caucus and indeed all Canadians welcome the good news of the release of the 55 Canadian hostages held by the Bosnian Serbs. Yesterday the French foreign minister called for a withdrawal of its peacekeepers in Bosnia. This only makes public the growing realization that this is a political, not a military problem and that peacekeepers cannot do their job in the current environment.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Now that Canadians have been released, will the government align with France's position and use this opportunity to withdraw our troops?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to pay tribute to the soldiers who acted with calm and courage. They know they are involved in an extremely important mission which is to help the poor civilians who are trapped in this terrible situation by providing them with food, medication and so on.

I was at a discussion in Budapest. The situation is very bad. The President of Bosnia was pleading with me to try to keep our troops there because they are considered the best. Canada has no political interest in the area. I said to him that our interest was not political, that our interest was in peace and to help the civilian population.

We have a mandate until the month of February. In January cabinet will review that. I would like to point out that we had debates in this House of Commons. Members of the House were consulted and the great majority were in agreement that we should be there to help the civilian population. We will review the situation in January. Of course not only Canada has troops there. There are others and we have to consult them too.

I have to say again that we are all very proud of the way the Canadian soldiers behaved. I was delighted to hear the President of Bosnia tell me that the Canadians are the best there.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in reaction to the French government's call for a withdrawal of peacekeepers from Bosnia the Prime Minister said: "Probably they want to reassure their own people". Those are the Prime Minister's words.

I ask the Prime Minister: Does this government wish to reassure Canadians now that the hostages are free by moving to withdraw our troops?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said that it is very important for everyone to plan to make sure that if there is a situation, for example the lifting of the embargo, we said we were to go. If there were to be some other disastrous situation we have to have a plan ready to make sure our troops can be evacuated. We have been working on that for many months.

We have been in contact too with NATO and the UN to make sure the plans are ready if evacuation is needed. I hope it will not be needed, but it is very good to do the planning now in case we have the need later.

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*[Translation]***MIL DAVIE SHIPYARD**

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The MIL Davie shipyard, the only other bidder for an important Hibernia contract, has clearly been wronged by the Hibernia consortium's decision to award the contract to Saint John Shipbuilding without a call for tenders. The Canada-Newfoundland Board, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Prime Minister have all admitted that. The Hibernia consortium has itself ignored the Prime Minister's directive by flatly refusing to review its decision.

(1440)

How can the Prime Minister explain that, despite the clear directive issued by him to the president of the consortium, Mr. Ken Hall, Hibernia has refused to redress the injustice to which he has himself so strongly objected?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I made a complaint last week. I was in Newfoundland yesterday. The people who had been awarded the first contract lost it for productivity reasons.

I think the company should not have acted in this way. I have said it clearly, but since we own only 8.5 per cent of the company's shares, we cannot force it to change its decision. I

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still think it is a bad decision for both the Newfoundland shipyard and the Quebec shipyard.

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister admit to his inability to force Hibernia to respect his decision when the federal government is investing over \$3 billion of taxpayers' money in this risky venture?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Canadian government has funded 8.5 per cent of the total project.

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[English]

SHIPBUILDING

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. Will the minister ensure that federal contracts for new ships and the major repair of ships are done in an open, transparent manner? Will all interested parties such as private companies and those owned by subsidized provinces be required to compete by rules as set forward in the proper business supplier-customer manner?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that first, it is the government's policy where it does have shipbuilding requirements to meet them from Canadian yards. Second, as the Prime Minister himself has stated very clearly in this House and elsewhere, that should be done through a clear, transparent, open bidding process.

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ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for ACOA.

The country is on its knees financially and the minister stands on a soapbox in Atlantic Canada making noises about ending ACOA's role in handing out grants. Yet at the same time he says ACOA will be involved in providing venture capital to businesses, a function already performed by the Federal Business Development Bank.

Can the minister explain how this move will serve to level the playing field for businesses in Atlantic Canada when it is clear to everyone that taxpayers' dollars will be spent foolishly through a political body?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was anticipating an apology from the hon. member today. Yesterday in a press release he made the ridiculous suggestion that a linkage may exist between a third party contribution to Liberal election campaigns and the receipt of ACOA assistance. I want to say to

the hon. member that is patently false. I hope he will do the honourable thing and apologize to the minister of fisheries and myself when he joins his feet in a moment.

With regard to the question he has asked, the Atlantic venture capital fund we are proposing is to be done in co-operation with provincial governments as well as the private sector.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, am I supposed to join my feet now?

I do not think this government gets it. In 1992-93 alone ACOA wrote off over \$50 million in bad debts. When will these Liberals learn that governments know very little if nothing about running business? Does the minister know the difference between a grant and a loan that is not repaid at taxpayers' expense? If these loans are all going to be repaid, why not let FBDB or the banks fill the role? Why do we need two government agencies to provide the exercise?

(1445)

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought if the hon. member would join his feet perhaps now he can keep his mouth shut.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would encourage all hon. members to address others with a little more respect on both sides. I call on the hon. minister of public works.

Mr. Dingwall Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer, I was anticipating an apology because of the assertions that the hon. member made.

The House should be aware that the reference to the minister of fisheries and myself is patently false. The House should know that when the chief of staff of the office of the leader of the Reform Party ran in the last federal election, he received from a contributor not one, not two, but \$8,000 from Clearwater Fine Foods. That particular company received financial assistance from ACOA both before and after the election.

I think the hon. member owes the House an apology.

The Speaker: Both the questions and the answers are ranging far afield today.

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[Translation]

CUSTOMS BROKERS

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. The Department of National Revenue is about to implement, in January 1995, new regulations which will penalize the small customs brokerage

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firms. They will require surety bonds of up to \$10 million for the goods they clear through customs.

Given the very negative impact of that decision on the existence of small customs brokers, does the Minister of National Revenue intend to answer their demands in the near future?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem relating to the failure of these customs agents to which the hon. member referred is a serious one because the moneys they take in which are due to the Government of Canada is lost in many cases when the companies go bankrupt.

In addition, there are some major problems with respect to the amount of capitalization that some of these companies have. This means that assets are very few and slight even though the individual who may own the company may have other assets of considerable worth.

We have therefore instituted, in co-operation with the Association of Customs Brokers, a new scheme to provide adequate insurance for those who might be faced with financial difficulties. This scheme has been accepted by the association and accepted by the department. I believe it is a beneficial scheme to make sure that the problems that arise, in particular for the customers of customs brokers, will not reoccur in the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows very well that members of that association, including the large American companies, have the right to one vote for each office they operate in different districts. Therefore, the process is totally undemocratic.

Does the Minister of National Revenue recognize that if the proposed regulations were to be implemented in their present form, it could force several small independent customs brokers out of business and that would mean several thousand jobs lost for Canadians?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when new measures are introduced with respect to insurance provisions it is always possible that some people will be in such financial position that they will be unable to obtain insurance, whether through their association or outside it. That is a possibility.

However, I would assure the hon. member that the system put in place was developed by the customs brokers. We are attempting to assist so that there will be some self-regulation and self-policing in the customs brokerage industry. Therefore the risks to the public of Canada and in particular the risks to the individual customers of customs brokers will be dramatically reduced.

(1450)

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, section 8 of the public accounts details an endless list of payments made to interest groups, everything from \$73,000 for fashion design to \$54,000 for World Food Day Association.

The government has been in power for over a year but it has made no cuts to interest group funding. Thirteen months later, \$50 billion deeper in debt, and the government still has not made any announcement.

Will the President of the Treasury Board please tell the House and all Canadians why we still have not had any cuts to interest group funding, and when will he act?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer I give is similar to the answer that the finance minister and the parliamentary secretary have given.

This is all part of the process leading up to the budget. In fact, it is part of the program review process. Special interest group funding, I can assure the hon. member, is under examination, as is every program and service, as we attempt to get our spending in line, to get our deficit down to 3 per cent of GDP.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian taxpayers are upset, the Reform Party is upset, even Liberal backbenchers are upset about the gross waste of taxpayers' money.

Why is the President of the Treasury Board not upset about this waste of money? Why is he not acting now rather than waiting for the budget which is several more months and several hundred million dollars later?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while my hon. friend and the third party is talking about the matter, we are acting. The matter is fully under review. Consultations are going on with various departments on all aspects of spending, including interest group funding.

* * *

CRTC

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. He will no doubt recall that a recent decision by the CRTC to allow for a rate increase in local telephone rates by provincial companies may result in a \$72 a year increase for local subscribers.

That decision is being appealed by marketplace competitors. But it is important to understand that such a decision by a non-elected body constitutes a de facto tax imposition, especially on those who are little able to meet such costs and who

rely on these telephones for safety, for social security and social contact.

Is the minister going to do something about this, and how soon?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member indicates, a number of groups have appealed the decision of the CRTC-9419. They petitioned the governor in council to review that decision.

It is under consideration by me. I will be making recommendations to cabinet in due course with full consciousness of the implications involved and the time that the decision will take effect.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The minister has still not seen fit to speak to the Director of the Bureau of Veterinary Drugs following the interventions of his official with some members of Parliament. Acting as a lobbyist for some pharmaceutical companies, Mr. Ritter still has access to the Health Canada office and the minister has not yet responded to that.

Will the minister finally admit that Mr. Ritter is indeed in conflict of interest under sections 6(a), 6(b), 26, 42(b), 42(c), and so on, of the Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Code for Public Office Holders, and will she immediately take the disciplinary action necessary to correct this unacceptable situation?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said in the House yesterday, my officials continue to look into this question. When their investigation is complete, they will be reporting to me. I will be pleased to share the findings with the hon. member.

(1455)

I want to clarify a few points. The person in question is not on leave as the director of the Bureau of Veterinary Medicine. He will not be returning to that position if and when he returns to Health Canada.

As concerns the review process for BST, scientific considerations are absolutely the only thing that will have any bearing on the approval process.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Is the Prime Minister willing to do what the Minister of Health should have done a long time ago, that is to immediately apply section 33 of the Code which provides for disciplinary action, including dismissal of officials in conflict of interest, if appropriate?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said and I will repeat again that the officials in my department are reviewing the situation. When they have finished their review they will report to me and I will be pleased to share the findings.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in 1990 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, gasoline from a leaking Petro-Canada underground tank migrated under the neighbouring house of the Curtis family.

The gasoline fumes in and around the house during the past four years have caused the Curtis family to lose their home, lose their family business and most tragically of all, it has caused permanent mental and physical damage to the Curtis' seven year old daughter.

What is the environment minister prepared to do about this environmental and human disaster?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the sensitivity of the issue and the fact that obviously the brain damaged child is in very serious condition, what I would like to do is take a look at all the circumstances and report back to the House.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer.

My supplemental is for the Minister of Natural Resources. During this four-year nightmare for the Curtis' Petro-Canada has treated the family like criminals. When the spill occurred in 1990, Petro-Canada was a crown corporation and is now a company in which the government owns over 70 per cent of the shares.

Does the minister condone the bullying manner of Petro-Canada and will she intervene on the Curtis' behalf to ensure Petro-Canada is financially responsible for the additional medical treatment and care required for the Curtis' daughter?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not condone bullying, if that is what happened in this case. I do not know whether that is the case, but I assure the hon. member that I will take this matter under advisement. I will investigate it and report back to him and this House.

*Oral Questions***LATIN AMERICAN SUMMIT**

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who tomorrow will be attending the Latin American summit in Miami.

I want to ask the Prime Minister if he will assure the House that at the summit he will raise two specific issues. First, will he raise the issue of the exclusion of Cuba from the summit and the continued illegal and immoral blockade by the United States of that country.

Second, given the very critical situation in Chiapas, Mexico will the Prime Minister urge at the summit an open dialogue and a peaceful, negotiated, non-military settlement in Chiapas?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the question of Mexico we have already mentioned many times to the authorities there that we want them to negotiate a settlement with the people of that province. I am informed that the dialogue is going better than it was some months ago. But I will press the issue with the newly elected president if I have the occasion.

As far as Mr. Castro and Cuba not being present are concerned, we would have had no problem seeing him there. It was decided that he was not to be invited and I was not the one inviting people to that summit.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration.

The minister of immigration recently announced that it was the intention of the minister to increase the number of business class immigrants coming from India.

(1500)

My concern is that according to a story in the *Globe and Mail*, this increase will come from around Bombay and will not include areas such as Punjab. This situation is of grave concern to the many constituents in my riding of Indian descent. What is the basis for the new business immigration strategy?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the immigration plan that this government tabled on November 1, two key operative measures describe our business immigration: first, to promote it aggressively in a balanced way across the globe; second, to diversify. Seventy-five per cent of all business immigration comes from Asia and we think that is good, evidenced by the recent trip by the Prime Minister and a Canadian delegation.

However, we would also like to diversify in other areas of the world that would like to take advantage of the business immigration program. We identified such examples as western Europe, eastern Europe and the Middle East.

With respect to India, we all know that the majority of immigrants are coming from the Punjab through the New Delhi office. Other countries of the world are also in southern India.

It is not a question of simply excluding individuals, it is also being present in southern India where I think the recent trip of the minister of trade showed that Canada could reap some tremendous economic benefits and also continue to have the programs through New Delhi servicing Indians who wish to make Canada their home.

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*[Translation]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise with the customary question for Thursday. Would the government House leader tell us what the order of business will be until the end of this session?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today we are going to continue with the Bloc opposition day and there will be votes on supply at 5.30 this afternoon.

Tomorrow we are going to call third reading of Bill C-51, the grain bill, and Bill C-56, the Environmental Assessment Act amendments, followed if possible by report stage of Bill C-52, the Department of Public Works and Government Services reorganization.

On Monday we will take up where we left off on Friday and follow this business with report stage of Bill C-44 with respect to immigration. On Monday as well we expect to introduce legislation regarding employment equity. We intend to propose that this bill be referred to committee before second reading pursuant to Standing Order 73(1).

This will both meet the legislative requirement for a parliamentary review of existing legislation and provide the House with the most broad possible opportunities for updating the law on this matter. Subject to progress on other legislation, we would like to add this matter to the business for Tuesday.

On Wednesday we intend to deal with report stage of Bill C-53, the Canadian Heritage reorganization bill. On Thursday we will deal with third reading of that bill.

That completes my weekly business statement.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—PROCESS INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to reply to the member for Québec-Est who questioned my remarks just before Question Period.

The hon. member said that he and the Quebecois people were insulted by my remarks which attacked the Parizeau proposals as undemocratic.

I want to make it very clear that I made no attack on the people of Quebec, whom I respect. My remarks were directed at the Government of Quebec and the Bloc Quebecois. Neither the Parti Quebecois nor the Bloc Quebecois is one and the same as the people of Quebec, although sometimes those members believe they are.

I said that the Parizeau proposals were not democratic because first, they were putting the law on independence before the National Assembly first and they were going to consult and have the referendum afterward. Second, they had no mandate from the electorate because they only received 44 per cent of the vote.

(1505)

Third, their regional commissions were structured to favour the independence option and were not neutral. Fourth, the proposals were fuzzed, unclear and misleading.

As to my use of French in this House, when I speak in Parliament I usually use my mother tongue which is English, which is my right.

[Translation]

When I talk with my constituents, I use their language, whether French or English, and that is my right also.

Mr. Laurin: Madam Speaker, on a point of order! We were of the opinion that the hon. member had a minute left when he was interrupted for question period. At that time, the Bloc Quebecois member had the floor and the Chair said he would let him finish and allow an answer from the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. But you went directly to the answer, without giving the minute to our party.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The clerk will correct me if I am wrong, but I had understood that there was one minute left for the answer of the government member. I will give the minute left to the hon. member for Québec-Est.

Supply

Mr. Marchand: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to what I said earlier about the statement made by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce because I find it insulting for all members of this House when he says the Quebec referendum was unethical.

How can he, who was a member of the Trudeau cabinet, say that a process such as this one was unethical? In 1980, Mr. Trudeau came to the Paul Sauvé Arena and promised Quebecers he would amend the Constitution. Then he deceived Quebec by limiting its powers and creating the problems we have now.

Not only that, and I will conclude with this, the hon. member was also part of the Trudeau cabinet in 1970 when—

[English]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, not only was I not in the Trudeau cabinet at that time, but I voted against the Constitution of 1982.

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure that many Canadians watching the events of the past two days must be experiencing a deep and visceral reaction as the new Government of Quebec and its separatist allies in this Chamber finally launched their desperate push to realize their dreams and tear Quebec out of Canada.

Some Canadians must be feeling a sense of concern and anxiety about the future of a country we cherish. Some Canadians must be feeling a sense of dismay, of déjà vu. Are we ever going to put these issues behind us or are we condemned to regular flare-ups of a national unity crisis like a bad toothache?

Some must be feeling deep frustration, a sense of wanting to get involved, to have a say, to make a difference. The frustration comes from seeing the separatist politicians trying to hijack a great and successful country. The frustration comes from having to hear the kind of nonsense spouted by the separatists, nonsense about how simple and easy separation would be, nonsense about how Canada does not work and especially nonsense about how Canadians in other provinces feel about Quebec.

The separatists are already presenting us with a wide array of distortions. Their rhetoric will get louder and louder and more and more extreme as they draw closer to their day of reckoning. They will be trying to tell Quebecers there is no place for them in Canada, no recognition, no accommodation. They will be telling Quebecers other Canadians want them to leave or no longer care one way or the other.

They will ignore the nearly 1 million francophone Canadians who live outside the boundaries of Quebec, whom they intend to cast overboard, to sink or swim.

Supply

(1510)

They will be telling Quebecers our partnership has reached a stage of irreconcilable differences, that it is time to divvy up the assets and to get on with our separate lives. They will be telling Quebecers it would be a painless breakup, while telling the rest of Canada that we cannot get along anymore, but by the way, we will still need the use of your dollar and open access to your markets.

It is hard to know how to react, to laugh at the absurdity and the contradictions of the separatist project, to cry at the tragedy of so much talent, time and energy being wasted chasing a totally unnecessary leap into the unknown, or to get angry at the dishonesty and the contempt that permeate the separatist arguments.

There is so much that is absurd, the prospect of soldiers in the new Quebec army lining up to be paid in Canadian dollars, the idea that Quebec needs independence to choose its own immigrants side by side with promises by the PQ of unrestricted mobility of labour with the rest of Canada.

It is strange to hear the lamenting about how there is no room for Quebec in Canada when we can look around this city and see Quebecers occupying the highest offices this country has to offer. It is strange to hear Mr. Parizeau vaunt the accomplishments of Quebec at every opportunity, waxing eloquent and quite rightly so about the social, economic and cultural progress Quebec has made these past 30 years.

He does not even blush and acknowledge that all of that progress took place inside Canada. It came through hard work and partnership between Quebecers and other Canadians and through partnership between two levels of government. It is strange to hear the separatists denounce the rigidities of a system that gave Quebec so many tools and the French language and culture a secure home.

There is much that would be saddening if the separatists ever had their way, the dismembering and discarding of a model of governance that points the way to the world of the future. The future does not belong to microstates, it belongs to partnerships of communities sharing their sovereignty to pursue a better life for their citizens.

It is sad to see the separatists' headlong race back into the past. There is much to provoke anger. The separatists will denigrate and belittle accomplishments of Canada. They will play fast and loose with the truth. They will show contempt for anyone who does not share their vision or their zeal.

To laugh, to cry, to get angry, I urge my fellow Canadians not to give in to an emotional reaction, to realize what is going on here. This is the beginning of an increasingly desperate and panicky assault by the separatist movement. They have one shot at making the case to break up Canada. They know deep down they carry an enormous burden of proof and it is starting to

rattle their nerves. As they get more and more rattled, they are desperately trying to put their opponents on the defensive and it is not going to work.

There is an overwhelming consensus that it is time for Quebecers to make a decision. In 1995 we will come to a fork in the road and we will take one path or the other. It is that simple. The stark clarity makes some people uncomfortable. That is understandable, but there is no longer any use denying that the fork in the road is here in front of us.

I share in the consensus that the time has come for a decision, but I want that decision to last and to be accepted gracefully by the separatists. For the decision to stick it must be seen by Quebecers and by Canadians in every other province as a clear result on a clear question after a fair and full debate. It should come at the end of the process used twice before, the Quebec referendum law. That is what the Parti Québécois promised in order to get elected, albeit by the narrowest of margins. That is what it is morally and politically obliged to deliver now.

The resolution is misleading because it ignores the reality that Quebec's future is Canada's future, that after two centuries of partnership, of building a political, social and economic union together, Canadians in other parts of the federation would be indifferent or unaffected by a decision by one-quarter of its members to leave.

Other Canadians have a right to talk with Quebecers about that decision, about the options they have. We want Quebec to stay. We want to get back to what all of us Canadians do best, working out practical solutions to real problems, innovating and adapting, bending and compromising, adjusting and changing. We have always found the ways to live together, to work together, to build together. We have found ways to acknowledge and indeed to cherish our differences and at the same time realize how much we share. We have had a successful federation in this country for 127 years. We have woven together an economic union, a sharing social community and a democratic political union so well that too many of us have forgotten what we have to lose.

(1515)

Why federalism? It is disarmingly simple. Federations allow communities to come together under peaceful and democratic political structures to share the benefit of social and economic co-operation while retaining the very high degree of local control over issues that matter most to local communities. It is a simple idea like most great ideas. It is an idea that has worked in societies that are on the surface relatively uniform, societies like Germany, Australia, and the United States.

It is a particularly important idea in societies where communities based on language, religion or ethnicity live side by side, societies like Switzerland, India and, yes, Canada. It is a great idea but it is constantly under attack. All over the world there are politicians who promote difference, who offer people false hope

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that their lives would suddenly improve if walls went up with other communities.

Some of them sit in this Chamber. Federalism gives local communities the scope to exercise control over many aspects of their lives, especially in matters close to the cultural vitality and the social development of the community.

Federalism enables communities to co-operate with their neighbours and to work together in pursuit of common goals. Federalism is a way to pool resources, talent and energy in pursuit of these goals. Federalism provides a framework of peace, order and security and allows communities and individuals to live side by side.

Federalism creates a common identity and a purpose that can transcend differences without replacing local identities and local communities. Federalism provides the structures of an economic union but places them under the control of a democratic legislature. Federalism provides the basis for a sharing community, for a redistribution of wealth from richer to poorer regions and from richer to poorer citizens.

Federalism allows minority groups to exercise democratic control over their communities and to tailor laws and government services to meet their own needs and preferences while at the same time exercising a powerful voice in the legislature and executive that serves the community as a whole.

It is true that some of these benefits can be realized by partnership between small and independent nation states. Around the world there are military alliances, trade agreements, various forms of co-operation and mutual assistance but a closer look shows there is a common striving in many parts of the world to move beyond security pacts and free trade.

The extra element to the sharing community and democratic control over matters of common interest are the bonds that are the most difficult to forge and the most vulnerable to being cut. A successful federation is a whole that is much stronger than the sum of its parts.

It involves at least two or maybe three strong levels of government and a natural tension between them. It involves disagreements and compromises. Running a federal system of government is a noisy, sometimes messy, affair. Sometimes it is frustrating, especially to those who seek quick fixes and bold dramatic gestures.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry. The hon. member's time is up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Madam Speaker, the debate that is taking place here today is historic and I expected a higher level of debate from the other

side. I see that our colleagues opposite consistently select for their statements examples and quotes that support their position, while omitting examples and quotes that are unfavourable to it.

For example, this morning, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs went through newspapers from coast to coast, he said to show how editorial writers were all against the sovereignist solution that we are advocating. Except that one article in *Le Devoir*, which is also somewhere between those two coasts, as far as I know, and on the front page, which is hard to forget—

(1520)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. The hon. member must respond to the comments of the member for Edmonton East.

Mr. Mercier: I am getting there, Madam Speaker, but since we are discussing generalities, it all takes time.

The hon. member gave a general defence of the federal option, and my answer was that the general arguments we have heard lack consistency. May I proceed, Madam Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All right.

Mr. Mercier: So I think that should interest the hon. member. In Ottawa, according to Jean Dion's article, the first salvos that were fired stressed the undemocratic nature of the Parizeau plan. It is all very convenient, now that the government is headed by Jean Chrétien, a man who does not want to talk about the Constitution, so that the federal government can no longer argue, at it did in 1980, the case for renewed federalism to accommodate that unruly province. This deals with the objections we just heard.

Next, in a reference to prosperous federations, they say: Switzerland is prosperous, but the USSR was not. Brazil is not. Russia is not. These are federations, which proves that a federal system is no guarantee of prosperity.

Third, who or what determines the quality of our lives, Madam Speaker? People, Canadians and Quebecers, not the federal system, determine our standard of living. I am told this country has the highest standard of living in the world, Madam Speaker. When you cut a cake in two, are the two halves smaller than they were before? Not as far as I know.

For instance, Norway and Sweden were one country until 1904–05, when Sweden accepted Norway's separation. Did Norway and Sweden become impoverished after they were separated? They are among the most prosperous countries mentioned.

What about the G-7? They say we will not be part of the G-7. Well, we could not care less, because you do not have to be big to be prosperous. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, with a popu-

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lation of 300,000, has an unemployment rate of 2 per cent. We would not mind that.

That being said, I remain convinced that sovereignty is the best choice for Quebec's future, and I invite the people of Blainville—Deux—Montagnes to take an active part in the debate that starts today.

[*English*]

Ms. Bethel: Madam Speaker, there are several aspects that I would like to respond to. I want to make it absolutely clear that we are not defending federalism. The record of federalism in this country is clear to all Canadians.

The hon. member talked about the quality of people. I think that is where federalism's greatest gift lies. It does not matter in this country which province we live in, which city, which community, which neighbourhood. This country cares for all of its people.

We have provided education, social programs and economic prosperity through good times and bad times. We do not determine that on where we live. It is available to all citizens. Those who live in the inner city of Montreal are feeling the same pain as those who live in Edmonton East inner city neighbourhood. Federalism can deal with that in a fair and equitable manner.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am particularly pleased to debate this motion on the legitimacy of the consultation process on Quebec sovereignty, released this week by the Right Hon. Premier of Quebec, Mr. Jacques Parizeau.

Mr. Parizeau is known for his honesty, his candour and his humanity. He has a reputation for saying what he is doing, and exactly what he says. He is proving it this week, intelligently, skilfully and competently.

(1525)

We are proud of Mr. Parizeau. We can only be proud of our Premier and glad to be associated with such an exciting process, a highly democratic process.

I have been an avid observer of the political scene from a very early age, but especially so since 1987. I followed with interest what led us to the Meech Lake Accord. This accord was the last attempt of our fellow Quebecers who still believed, then, that Quebec had a place within the Canadian Confederation.

It was also the last attempt to make up for the affront perpetrated by the present Prime Minister of Canada and his team, in 1981, during the night of the long knives, which led to the unilateral patriation of the Constitution. That was, to use

some now famous words, the last attempt to make Canada whole, to have federalist Quebecers sign the Canadian Constitution with honour and enthusiasm.

I lived through the second phase, the one which led to the failure of Meech. I observed it closely, but with much sadness, especially when the report of the special committee studying the proposed companion resolution to the Meech Lake Accord, better known as the Charest Report, was published.

The Charest report, named after the member for Sherbrooke, reduced to next to nothing what was already considered as the bare minimum, the entrance door allowing Quebec to try, one last time, to take its place within the Canadian federation, a springboard for Quebec to get all the powers, all the tools it needed in the areas of social programs, the economy and also culture.

The tabling of this report burying the Meech Lake Accord sadly put an end, an emotional one for most of my fellow citizens who still believed in that country, to a saga which had started with the "beau risque" as a hopeful initiative.

Quebecers remember this report tabled by the present member for Sherbrooke who was then minister responsible for the committee which really killed the Meech Lake Accord.

Those were days of sadness, emotion, and grief for me, but I was proud of what happened after. I was very proud to see MPs from Quebec, seven of them at the time, who were eventually joined by an eighth one, the member for Saint-Hubert, resign because they disagreed with the government foiling the final attempt, putting an end to the "beau risque". They took a stand and I take this opportunity to salute them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Loubier: They took a stand and all Quebecers were proud of them. They stood up against this attempt by Canadian federalists to enslave a whole people, my people. I repeat, the member for Sherbrooke was there among them, and the present Prime Minister was in the hallways with his walkman, and often with a walkie talkie, to give instructions, in order to block the approval of any distinctive status, or to put an end to any attempt to give a distinctive status to Quebec.

Among the eight who stood firm, who fought to the end for the interests of Quebecers and also to preserve their dignity and pride, there was the present Leader of the Opposition, our leader and friend—my best friend. I want to extend my affectionate greetings to him and his wife, Audrey, and his two children, Alexandre and Simon. He is the reason why, at the time, I was moved very positively by what was happening, because the Quebec people had just acquired a great leader. Quebec had just acquired a new leader, who was standing firm with six of his colleagues, and later on with a seventh one. We are proud of that.

(1530)

After that, Madam Speaker, as you will recall, there was a lot of constitutional turbulence and commotion. Remember the Beaudoin–Dobbie report, the Beaudoin–Edwards report, the Spicer commission and Charlottetown. These documents were supposed to fulfill the aspirations of Quebecers, after they were betrayed by the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord.

We took part in all these debates. We are sovereignists, but we took part in all these debates. Why are Quebec federalists, the Leader of the Opposition in the Quebec legislature, including federal members from Quebec, Liberals and others, refusing to discuss ideas, to discuss federalism, while we took part in all federalist debates which led to the adoption of those reports aimed at one thing only. They were a smoke screen used to make Quebecers believe that a reform, even the slightest reform, was possible so they could have their place, a real place which they would be proud and honoured and willing to occupy.

Why do federalists refuse a process which is eminently democratic, open, allowing for the exchange of ideas, like the one announced by the Premier of Quebec? Why? Because they are afraid. They are afraid of their ideas because it is impossible to defend a rigid status quo that prevents the normal economic, social and cultural progress of the people of Quebec. During Question Period, I heard the Prime Minister say that it is within Canada that Quebecers have developed. Actually, we have done so despite Canada.

Remember all the efforts and energy we have had to spend since 1964, the days of Jean Lesage, in order to patriate powers that we considered essential to our development. Madam Speaker, look at what we have been doing in the last seven years in particular. We have done nothing but that, try to develop, try to develop employment, to stimulate our economic growth with powers which are presently in federal hands and which Quebec is being denied. Is that what you call harmonious development within the federal system?

No. If Quebecers have become what they are today, if their businesses are so dynamic and their workers so skilled, it is because at one point in time we decided to take charge of our own affairs despite all opposition and despite the federal system that tried to paralyse us, to keep us down and even to use force to prevent us from developing our collective wealth.

Remember Bill S–31. There was the Bélanger–Campeau Commission. We also participated in the Bélanger–Campeau Commission. And if I have one reason, as an economist, to be proud of the work accomplished there, it is for one particular aspect of it: it put an end to all the economic bugbears and

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showed us that Canada's threat, not to allow Quebec goods and services into Canada, was empty.

With Ontario alone, the net balance of trade between Ontario and Quebec is over \$3 billion; that is, Ontario sells Quebec \$3 billion more of goods and services than Quebec sells Ontario. Would Ontario close its border? Bélanger–Campeau stifled this kind of nonsense. It also put an end to scare tactics like saying Quebec would lose its milk production.

When even the president of the UPA contradicts the current Leader of the Opposition in Quebec, who said "You will lose your quotas, and your share of milk production", that is something. So, I would urge you and every citizen, regardless of ethnic origin, language and political affiliation, to take part in this democratic process. I am sending out a special invitation to the English-speaking community. I would have a short paragraph to read them, if I may Madam Speaker, in their language.

[English]

"Anglophones and francophones of Quebec are still democrats and it is as democrats that I invite you today, most sincerely, to take this friendly hand we are extending to you, to help solve the question of importance to you and to join with us in building together the kind of country that we want to live in. Do not forget the future of Quebec is yours. The future and prosperity of Quebec is also in your hands. I am asking you not to remain on the sideline of your evolution and participate in the process proposed by the prime minister of Quebec".

[Translation]

I also send out a special invitation to the people of my riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot to participate in this eminently democratic process, as well as all interested organizations and individuals throughout Montérégie.

(1535)

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been listening with interest to this play that the Bloc Québécois has been performing for us since this morning. The problem is that I still do not know whether it is a tragedy or a comedy. It may be a tragicomedy.

The draft bill proposed by the separatists is a monumental deception. The Bloc Québécois should be ashamed of associating with this undemocratic process.

I always felt that the leader of the Bloc Québécois was a great democrat and I am convinced that, from his hospital bed, he must be upset by the PQ flouting the democratic process in Quebec. He must also realize that the PQ has just made a strategic mistake that will cost the separatists dearly. This bill

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insults Quebecers' intelligence. It is a bomb that will explode in the separatists' faces.

I have more confidence in Quebecers' integrity and intelligence. I am convinced that they will detect Mr. Parizeau's deception through the smoke screen he has put up. This process reminds me a little of a somewhat unscrupulous insurance agent who showed up at our house. He told me that I certainly needed insurance and that he would sell me term or permanent insurance. I asked him who had told him that I needed his insurance and I threw him out the door.

The leader of the PQ shows the same attitude by telling Quebecers in his patronizing manner: "I know what is good for you. You want independence, you want separation. Now, do you want separation with or without the Canadian dollar? With or without Canadian citizenship?"

I think that Quebecers will say no, not only to the PQ's and the BQ's separatist option, but also to the separatists' deception and manipulation.

Mr. Loubier: Madam Speaker, I have three comments to make following the hon. member's intervention. First, I want to ask him to show a little more respect for my leader and to remember that he has been involved in the referendum strategy for the last three months. Consequently, my leader certainly supports and endorses the process unveiled by Mr. Parizeau.

I also want to tell the hon. member—who was almost slanderous when he alluded to the honesty and integrity of sovereigntists—that we were not afraid, as I said earlier, to participate in the debate proposed to us by the federalists. Is it because, unlike maybe 1980 or shortly before, the federalists are running out of arguments to convince us to stay in Canada are thus unable to publicly debate this issue?

We are offering you a forum: Why not use it to discuss the issue, instead of hiding behind your desk and making comments which are almost disrespectful, if not downright slanderous? I also ask the hon. member to be careful when denigrating Quebec as well as the wishes of a whole nation. My colleague, the hon. member for Témiscamingue, told me that you both represent neighbouring ridings and that yours benefits immensely from that proximity. Indeed, many people living on the Quebec side cross the border into Ontario, to shop in the member's riding. Again, the hon. member should be careful when making comments.

We have common interests, as evidenced by this activity between the two ridings. So, let us be careful. We must respect the will of people, and we must also respect an eminently democratic process. All Quebec federalists should participate in the consultation process.

(1540)

If they do not want to move, then they should tell us, because the house is falling down. However, these federalists should come up with arguments to support their views. But do come to sit and talk. We are open, and we are very cool, calm and collected.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured and proud to take part in today's debate on the motion put forward by the Official Opposition. As you know, this motion deals with the draft bill on Quebec's sovereignty which was introduced by the Quebec Premier on Tuesday.

How exciting it is to discuss the draft bill that was introduced by the Quebec government and that sets forth a clear and responsible process which will let Quebecers from every walk of life take part in the debate on this plan for Quebec's constitutional future. To my knowledge, this is a unique process. I do not know that many countries in the world where the people are asked to express their opinion on a draft bill. This openness may be another distinct characteristic of Quebec.

The Quebec government wants the people of Quebec to express their views on the significant issues related to sovereignty. Discussions on significant issues related to the sovereignty proposal will be held in every Quebec region. During these consultations, Quebecers will have the opportunity to say what they expect from a sovereign Quebec.

Another issue will be raised in the debate on the draft bill. I am talking about Quebec citizenship. I would like to say a few words on this. The draft bill sets conditions for becoming a citizen of sovereign Quebec. If you examine clause 5 which deals specifically with this issue, you will see how generously all Quebec citizens will be treated.

It is refreshing to see that a sovereign Quebec would not use the same approach as the Canadian government with regard to citizenship. Quebec is showing openness and generosity by saying that it will give Quebec citizenship to all Canadian citizens domiciled in Quebec, without any restrictions. That is much different from the position of the present government which refuses to do the same thing, as indicated in the report published last spring by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. The committee recommended that the new Citizenship Act stipulate that a Canadian citizen who voluntarily or officially acquires citizenship of another country, other than by marriage or in other circumstances such as adoption, shall cease to be a Canadian citizen.

In contrast, the draft bill on sovereignty stipulates that, and I quote: "Quebec citizenship may be held concurrently with citizenship of Canada or of any other country." Quebec would not be the first country to adopt such a policy. France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy and Switzerland, just to name a

few, are among the countries whose residents can have dual citizenship.

Canada and Quebec have always been known as generous and welcoming states. As a matter of fact, Canada has recognized and accepted the principle of dual citizenship for a long time. Why this change by the federal government? Why should a Canadian citizen lose his or her citizenship if he or she acquires citizenship in another country? This restrictive policy has to be denounced. By any chance would that policy be meant to deny Quebecers the right to keep their Canadian citizenship if they so wish? Madam Speaker, this is a federalist ploy.

(1545)

The draft bill also proposes that once Quebecers have voted in favour of sovereignty, any citizen residing in Quebec will automatically be considered a Quebec citizen. It is nice to see there will be no distinction between Quebecers of many generations and those recently arrived. For instance, the new citizen coming from Africa or Asia will have the same rights as all old-stock Quebecers. Quebec has always been free from prejudice against new citizens from foreign countries.

I would like to quote a Quebec poet, novelist and essayist, a resident of Laval East, Fernand Ouellet. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on the Ludger Duvernay award he received in November. Mr. Ouellet said: "My ancestors came from Paris, Champagne, Normandy, Poitou, Brittany and the Basque country. Very early, they were exposed to people of various ethnic groups and showed their willingness to live with others. A Norman from Bayeux would naturally marry a Basque girl from Bayonne or a Breton from Quimper. That is how our nation was born."

Quebec is a land of immigrants. Our roots are French, Anglo-Saxon, Irish, Italian, Greek, Latin American and American. Our traditions, our customs and our art were always influenced by the input of immigrants who enhanced the cultural heritage of Quebec.

In future, this openness will remain and even increase. Quebecers are people who reside in Quebec and who like to live there. Quebec citizenship will include all those who live within Quebec's borders and who wish to take part in its development.

Madam Speaker, please, I would like to continue without all the silliness and insulting remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to continue.

Mrs. Debien: Madam Speaker, the draft bill adds that when the Quebec people have voted for Quebec sovereignty, every person who was born in Quebec or who was born outside Quebec and whose father or mother held Quebec citizenship will auto-

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matically be a Quebec citizen. These provisions are totally in keeping with what is done in many countries, including Canada.

Finally, the section of the draft bill also proposes, and I quote: "Quebec citizenship may also be acquired in the manner determined by the National Assembly." As in all sovereign and normal countries, newcomers will acquire Quebec citizenship under a legal framework, with regulations, and Quebec citizenship law will be applied according to clearly defined administrative procedures.

The federal government recently decided to close up, to become more suspicious and to see plots everywhere and systematic attempts at abuse coming from other countries. Quebec is opting for a much more positive approach to newcomers who want to live in Quebec. Quebec wants to join other nations at a time when challenges in trade, openness and globalization await us.

In closing, I would like to say that this draft bill proposes a thoughtful and analytical approach in which all Quebecers are invited to participate. I hope that the people of Laval East, whatever their political affiliation and their ethnic origin, and all groups and organizations from our area will come and participate in a highly democratic process to define the future of Quebec. The sharing of ideas and the opportunity to express them is what democracy is all about.

(1550)

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to what my colleague from Laval East had to say. I cannot help thinking that ever since I was elected to this House, the members opposite have been criticizing us and telling us that the status quo is unacceptable. With the draft bill that is proposed, I wonder what choices Mr. Parizeau, the members of the Bloc Québécois and the members of the Parti Québécois really have to offer Quebecers. We are being offered the same Canadian passport. We are being offered the same Canadian dollar. We are being offered the same international treaties. As well, they say in the draft bill that they want to be a member of the most important organizations in the world such as the UN, GATT and NAFTA. Quebec and Quebecers already have those privileges. What more do they want?

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): To become masters of our own destiny!

Mr. Discepola: To become masters of their own destiny? They already have control over their own tax system and their own legislative system. They have full control over education, language, culture and immigration. They have all that within Canada.

To meet the requirements of the Referendum Act, which is the authority on which all referendums and plebiscites are held in Quebec, it is clear that there have to be two parties: a yes and a no side. Is that democracy? The so-called democracy that we are being offered in that draft bill? Where are the two parties?

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Clause 1 provides that Quebec is already a sovereign country. What other choice is there for those who do not want Quebec to be sovereign? Where is the consultation process? Do they really want to know what other people think? I wonder where democracy stands when 13 members of the 15 commissions proposed are separatists and only two of them are federalists. Is that democracy?

Mr. Boudria: That is Parizeau-style democracy.

Mr. Discepola: Quebecers are offered an alternative. They should have the courage to ask the question correctly instead of writing 18 sections and after that asking the real question that is required by the Referendum Act, yes or no. They should find it in themselves to ask the relevant question: Do you want to separate from the most wonderful country of the world, yes or no? But do they have that kind of courage?

Mrs. Debien: Madam Speaker, at times I have the sneaky suspicion that Liberal members have not read the bill.

An hon. member: They cannot read.

Mr. Boudria: It takes only five minutes.

Mrs. Debien: They must have skipped some parts. This draft bill says that there will be a period of information and participation during which the bill can be improved. What does that mean? It means that we can listen to opinions, we can entertain proposals for amendment, and that is precisely what we expect from the Liberals. But they do not want to. They are stuck on the status quo.

How can they come and talk to us when they are mired in the status quo. They skip stages too. Improvements will be made, maybe even changes. Everyone is invited to take part. There will be a debate in the National Assembly and then this bill will be approved by the people in a referendum.

(1555)

They forget that. They forget to acknowledge that there will be a referendum on this draft bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has run out. I recognize the hon. whip of the government.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to take part in the debate this afternoon. Since this morning, I have been listening to the comments of the members opposite. What are they asking us? They want the House to enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the so-called democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec to allow Quebecers to choose the political and constitutional future of Quebec.

We should ask ourselves, if this is the wish of the Bloc Quebecois, why was that motion not introduced in the Quebec National Assembly in order to ask the National Assembly to do precisely what that motion proposes, because what has been introduced in the National Assembly is certainly not, in my opinion, democratic and most of all it will not allow Quebecers to choose their political and constitutional future.

The proposal introduced in the National Assembly is a sham and the members opposite know it. Why is it a sham? Because everything has been structured and organized in such a way that almost all participants are supporters of separation, excuse me, sovereignty as the members opposite would say, because they are afraid to use the real word and they do not have the courage and the conviction to say what we all know.

But we intend to tell the truth to Canadians, those who live in Quebec and the others, about what Quebecers are being told by the Parti Quebecois or by the minor league of the Parti Quebecois in Ottawa, the farm team, the Bloc Quebecois here in town. The members of the farm team and those of the Parti Quebecois want us to believe that they are the real defenders of Quebec.

An hon. member: It is certainly not you!

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, someone just said: "It is certainly not you". I was born in Quebec, I am Franco-Ontarian by adoption and I am proud to say that as a Quebecer, which I am, I can represent a riding in Ontario, in the Parliament of this country, because it is my right as it is the right of every Quebecer to be a candidate from coast to coast and to represent Canadians.

Members opposite want to deprive me of that right, they want to deprive Quebecers of that right and we should not forget that. Members opposite claim to defend not only the rights of Quebecers but those of francophones outside Quebec.

Madam Speaker, let me read an excerpt from the November 1993 issue of *The Hill Times*. In this article, the member for Quebec was interviewed, and she said:

[English]

"Bilingualism is only an issue in Quebec", said Ms. Gagnon. "People in Manitoba and Ontario don't really worry about speaking French, they just speak English. I don't expect to convince them to understand our position but I think we have to develop a sense of mutual respect."

[Translation]

My colleagues, the members for Nickel Belt, Cochrane—Superior, Timiskaming—French River and elsewhere, are well aware that Bloc members converted recently, perhaps after the member for Québec—Est, a Franco-Ontarian living in Quebec, spoke to his colleague, as I am a Quebecer living in French Ontario.

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(1600)

The sort of thing we see today, where a French-speaking Ontarian can represent a riding in Quebec City and a Quebecer like me represents a riding in Ontario, really reflects what Canada is all about. And I am proud to belong to this great country.

Members opposite are telling us: “We want a separate country”—sorry—“a sovereign country”.

Some hon. members: Separate.

Mr. Boudria: All right, separate. It is true, after all. But with all this, they want a Canadian passport. A big cheer for the Canadian passport. They want the Canadian currency. A big cheer for the Canadian currency. They want all the other benefits. They want to be part of the trade agreements negotiated by Canada on behalf of us all. A big cheer for our trade agreements that we managed to negotiate so well. Do you know the best way to keep all these benefits? It is to stay within Canada. It is as simple as that.

Of course, life could be better in this country, but compared to what? Residents of other countries of the world would do anything to be able to come here to Canada. Why? Because they know it is the best country in the world.

[*English*]

Everyone knows that, including the members across the way. They know the truth. They know what it is like.

[*Translation*]

Today, they do not have the courage to put the real question to the people in their province. They know that, in the last provincial election, separatists only got about 0.5 per cent more votes than the opposition, although quite a few federalists voted for them. What does it mean? It means that close to two thirds of Quebecers are against separation; at least 60 per cent of them are against what is called sovereignty because the people across the way do not have the courage to call a spade a spade. We know all this, so do Quebecers.

Why is it that all the Quebec organizations which voiced their opinion in the last few days condemned the initiative taken by the head of the Quebec government? Why did so many of them condemn it? One of my colleagues is going to list many of these groups. They condemn it because they know that these consultations are a sham. They know that the consultation process is pure make-believe and that the results are predetermined.

Let us look at the draft bill. It states that Quebec is a sovereign country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Boudria: The members opposite can beat their own drum. By doing so and by gazing at their own navel, as they are doing today, they might end up believing that Quebecers agree

with their statements. This is not the case. No matter how hard they beat their own drum, it will not make their wish come true.

[*English*]

Members across the way say that the monetary policy of Quebec should be dictated in another country and they say this in the name of sovereignty. How does one become sovereign by having another country dictate one's monetary policy? That is what they are advocating.

[*Translation*]

They are advocating the use of the Canadian currency in a foreign country. What the members opposite want is to deprive Quebecers of the opportunity to have, in this House of Commons, a finance minister coming from their own province and who could influence the monetary policy; they want to make sure that the Prime Minister of Canada does not come from Quebec to head this country's policy, a policy they will have to adhere to under their phony draft bill.

(1605)

What the members opposite are doing is shooting themselves in the foot, as the member for Nickel Belt so elegantly put it. That is the real truth. Quebecers will not be fooled. I am the thirteenth generation of Boudrias born in Quebec. Thirteenth! Out of all my ancestors and descendants, my son is the first Boudria to be born in Ontario, the fourteenth generation in Canada.

However, Quebec and the rest of Canada are his country just as Quebec and the rest of Canada are my country. This is our country and it will remain just that!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I read the motion today asking this House to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the government of Quebec. I have listened to speeches by the Bloc Quebecois members trying to tell us what they intend to do and ignoring whether or not it is legitimate. I have listened to the members of the government who are telling us how good federalism is while avoiding the issue of whether or not what the Bloc intends to do is legal and legitimate.

The way I see the process is that they intend to introduce a bill in the legislature of the province of Quebec that is going to trample all over federal responsibilities. They are going to debate a bill in the legislature of the province of Quebec that is outside their jurisdiction. They are going to vote on a bill that they have no mandate to vote on. Then they want to dress it all up with some false legitimacy measures by holding a referendum.

It is presumptuous in the extreme for them to think that this bill would be endorsed by the rest of the people in Canada. For them to think that by declaring that these are the conditions the

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rest of Canada would in any way support, and I think the process is a fraud, I think is illegal, illegitimate and immoral.

I would ask the previous speaker, as a member of this government, why he does not stand up and acknowledge and tell the people of Quebec that this entire process that is being proposed by the government of Quebec is as I said, illegal, illegitimate and immoral. The process is deceitful and a sham. Tell the people of Quebec that is the way it is.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I did not think there would be any doubt after my speech that I did not like the process very much. But if it needs to be repeated for the member across the way, I am certainly willing to do so in the time that is left.

We are not just debating legality here. Constitutional experts can argue until all the cows in Glengarry come home as to whether or not there is a constitutional provision, implicit or otherwise, for a province to secede from the rest of the country.

Mr. Discepolo: Are those cows from Vaudreuil too?

Mr. Boudria: That is not the point. The point is to keep this country together and it is the duty of all of us, in all our speeches, in all our comments and everything that we do. We should all speak in favour of Canada the way the Prime Minister does, lauding the virtues of living in the greatest country in the world, Canada, not whether or not there are six constitutional experts who say there is such an implicit power. Five would say otherwise or the reverse. What difference does that make? That does not make any difference if a country is trying to split itself apart. What we need is the intestinal fortitude to state that this is a great country and to work together to keep the country together, this great country of Canada. That is what is important, not the rest of that nonsense.

(1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish to make a few comments in response to the speech by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I am told I have one minute left.

I would simply like to say to the hon. member that once Quebec achieves sovereignty, he will be allowed to keep his Quebec citizenship if he so desires and if his country, Canada, allows him to. I want to add—I will come back to this later—that we have no lesson on democracy to learn from representatives of the Liberal government and certainly not from representatives of the Reform Party.

Let me refresh your memory with three examples. Quebecers were never consulted on the Constitution of 1867. And what about conscription which the federal government imposed in Quebec after promising—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order! Sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time is up. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has 30 seconds to reply.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I will try to be quick. In fact, the hon. members opposite have much to learn. The separatists have much to learn, if they think that they can deceive the Quebec people with phony consultations on such a contrived bill. It will not work, Madam Speaker. You will see, we will keep this great country together!

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is for me, as a Canadian and a Quebecer by choice, a very sad day. It was 35 years ago that we chose Quebec and Canada. For 20 years now, I have been following Quebec's politics. About 15 years ago, I took part in the first Quebec referendum, where Quebecers indicated they did not want anything to do with sovereignty—association as it was called then, with separation as we would say today. They reasserted their sense of belonging to Canada and to our federation.

Over a year ago, I was elected to this House through a democratic process, but we now see for the first time ever a government that will decide unilaterally not to respect our democratic process. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition in Quebec who said that this is not a consultation process, but rather a propaganda campaign, a subterfuge, an illusion. He added that the issue will be how, and not if, sovereignty will be achieved.

After promising to represent everyone, the leader of the Parti Québécois has initiated a process which excludes Quebec's federalists, that is the majority of Quebecers. If the government really wanted to find out what everybody thought about its proposal, it would not have launched a consultation process that takes into account only one side of the issue.

The president of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce himself has stated that he disagrees with these consultations. He said that the government will have to rethink the whole process. He added that, given the current situation, with only representatives of the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois sitting at the table, there would not be a balance in the views expressed and that it would make him very ill at ease.

The president of the Quebec manufacturers' association also decided not to take part in these consultations, because he thinks the draft bill is a sovereignty proposal and does not examine every possible option for Quebec.

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(1615)

Moreover, the presidents of the Quebec farmers' union and the Conseil du patronat also refused to take part in these consultations. These four examples clearly demonstrate that the PQ leader is not everybody's premier and that he only seeks the participation of separatists in this debate.

If he really was everybody's premier, he would have asked the clear and simple question that everyone can understand and answer: "Do you want to remain inside Canada, yes or no?" Unfortunately, this is not the case because he knows that the answer to this question would be no.

Finally, two of Quebec's most distinguished political scientists, Léon Dion and Vincent Lemieux, also severely criticized the PQ's breach of democracy. As reported on December 7, 1994, in *La Presse*, Mr. Dion said: "The process makes me very ill at ease. In such consultations, the public is often won over to a cause even before the process starts. In this case, it is Mr. Parizeau's cause."

The PQ leader continues to call himself everybody's premier and encourages everyone to take part in these consultations on the future of Quebec. At the same time, though, this draft bill does not include Quebec's cultural communities.

Last week, following many statements by members of the PQ government and their representatives, I rose here to ask the government to reaffirm unequivocally that members of cultural communities are, in fact, full citizens of our country. This draft bill confirms that the Parti Québécois does not consider members of cultural communities as first-class citizens of Quebec.

Can the leader of the PQ government invite the cultural communities to build a new Quebec and then ignore them completely in his plan? Nothing is forcing the Parti Québécois to subject Quebecers to an agonizing process. As my colleagues pointed out, Quebec is sovereign in all the areas under its jurisdiction. Quebecers live in one of the best countries in the world, a country they have built, a country they have chosen, just like my parents did. That country has evolved and Quebecers are part of this evolution.

Personally, I believe, as the Leader of the Opposition in Quebec said, and he will lead the campaign against separation before the next referendum in that province, that the process announced yesterday by the PQ government can only be democratic if it meets the following three conditions.

First, the process should be based on consultation, not on propaganda. The proposed process is unacceptable since it leads to a foregone conclusion. The solicited advice and discussions

have one single purpose: to draft a declaration of sovereignty based on the proposals and suggestions that only supporters of separation will be interested in formulating.

Second, the approach used should focus the public debate on the real issue. The PQ is asking the people to discuss the content of the declaration of sovereignty instead of the advisability of separation in order to avoid the real question: is it in the best interests of Quebecers to separate from the rest of Canada? Not only is the desire of the Parti Québécois to avoid this question dishonest, but it also shows that the PQ is afraid to hear what the answer of the majority of Quebecers to such a clear question would be.

Third, the process must be fair. In keeping with the spirit of Quebec's legislation on public consultations, both sides should have equal opportunities to put forward and explain their viewpoints. In practice, this means that both sides should have the same number of seats, the same resources and equal time.

(1620)

Will Quebecers have an opportunity to make a decision on a clear question in the coming referendum? I doubt it.

The question proposed by the Parti Québécois would ask the people of Quebec whether they are in favour of the Act passed by the National Assembly, which would define the features of Quebec sovereignty. It is a blank cheque the PQ government is asking for, because it knows very well that whole sections of the sovereignist plan would have to be negotiated with its partners in the years following the referendum.

Given these factors, and since I chose Quebec and Canada as my country, this is a very sad moment in the history of Quebec and since the democratic process is not being respected, I will vote against the Official Opposition's motion.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to tell the hon. member for Saint-Denis that her remarks about cultural communities, which she said are disregarded by the PQ government, are not only false, but also disrespectful to the PQ government and to the people of Quebec, a community that is not self-centred, but, on the contrary, quite open to immigration and newcomers. Let me give her just one example. One of her co-nationals, Nadia Assimopoulos, chaired the executive of the Parti Québécois in the 1980s. That is a telling example of the openness of Quebecers to cultural communities.

I would also like to comment on the so-called undemocratic character of the PQ process. I would like to remind the hon. member for Saint-Denis, as I set out to do a few minutes ago, of four events in the history of Quebecers that were instigated by the federal government, and ask her to consider whether they were democratic or not.

The first one is the Constitution of 1867. Quebecers never got a chance to have their say on that Constitution. Then, there was

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the conscription crisis. In 1940, the Mackenzie King government, which had made an electoral commitment not to impose conscription, reversed its position by holding a referendum in which 70 per cent of Quebecers voted against and 70 or 71 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec voted for conscription. Despite his previous commitment, Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King imposed conscription on all Quebecers.

More recently, the Trudeau government decided to proclaim the War Measures Act in Quebec and proceeded to arrest hundreds of people, and search the home of thousands of honest citizens. As a result, 20 people waited for months for charges to be laid against them.

(1625)

Is that the Liberals' idea of democracy? Those people have the nerve to teach us lessons in democracy. The last event is the patriation of the Constitution in 1982. The current Prime Minister was one of the main players in what was a tragedy for democracy, when they shoved down Quebecers' throats a Constitution they did not want. If that is what they call democracy, my Liberal colleagues and the hon. member for Saint-Denis do not know what they are talking about.

Ms. Bakopanos: Madam Speaker, every time a member of the opposition rises, it is to give us a history lecture—that is not interesting. Thank you very much, we have all read the history of Quebec and Canada. This is why Canada was chosen twice as the best country in the world to live in—including Quebec and Quebecers.

I would also like to say, just in passing, since he brought it up, that a compatriot of mine told me that she quit the Parti Quebecois because she was not a separatist, she never supported separatism and she does not share that vision of society.

[English]

An hon. member: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. We would all like to hear what the hon. member is saying.

Mrs. Bakopanos: Would you like me to repeat it in English?

[Translation]

If we have interpretation again, I would only like to repeat, as I said earlier, that I do not need a history lecture. I know the history of Canada.

[English]

I know what the history of this country is, the greatest country in the world. I want to repeat it.

[Translation]

I want to repeat that my parents chose to come to Quebec and Canada, and I am proud of it. I want to stay in a united Canada and I will fight for it. The Bloc Quebecois also has many history lessons to learn because history shows us that Quebec and Quebecers have really been quite well served by Canadian federalism.

We enjoy one of the best standards of living, we live in one of the best countries in the world. We really have a quality of life which is the envy of the world, and this is due to the unity of our country, to federalism which benefits Quebec. I wish to repeat that Nadia Assimpoulos, of whom you spoke, resigned from the Parti Quebecois because she was not in favour of the separation of Quebec. She is not a separatist, and never was.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville—Gun control.

[Translation]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to speak to this motion which reads as follows:

That this House enjoin the government to recognize the legitimacy of the democratic process initiated by the Government of Quebec in order to allow Quebecers to chart their own political and constitutional future.

This motion was initiated by the Government of Quebec. Of course, what we are witnessing here today is an attempt to discredit the Government of Quebec, to claim that it is undemocratic, that it does not know what democracy is and that it does not respect democracy in Quebec.

At the outset, I have to say that I, as well as other Quebecers, are clearly shocked to hear the Quebec Liberal Party, the federal Liberal Party and the Reform Party declare that Quebec's proposal is illegitimate. Need I remind you, Madam Speaker, that the Parti Quebecois is one of the most democratic parties of all time. The Parti Quebecois was democratically elected and forms the government.

(1630)

The Parti Quebecois has a tradition of parliamentary democracy. It is one of only a handful of parties in which members elect their leader by universal suffrage. It has passed laws governing the way in which political parties are financed. It is the only party in Canada to have done so to ensure that each and every Quebecer can make a contribution to a political party and that the government that is elected is free to act. It is not a party controlled by the big interests or by the big unions. When the government makes a decision, it is made freely. No other government in Canada can make such a claim.

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The Parti Québécois is responsible for passing of the Referendum Act. It participated in the work of the Bélanger–Campeau Commission which, of course, was set up by the Liberal Party of the day. It participated extensively, intelligently and regularly in the commission's work. Moreover, the outcome of the commission's activities was very positive for Quebec. The Parti Québécois also took part in the Charlottetown debate. It never refused to participate in this process. This, despite the fact that the federal government was proposing renewed federalism, a kind of draft project. We participated even though we were opposed. We were also involved in the 1992 referendum, as I just mentioned.

The Parti Québécois has also taken an innovative step by introducing legislation to establish a permanent voters' list. Why then is the federal government refusing to co-operate with the party in power? It is all rather incredible. In my opinion, the main reason why the federalists do not want to take part in this democratic debate is that they have nothing more to say. It is that simple. They have nothing to offer.

Over 35 years ago, Mr. Duplessis used to say we should get what belongs to us from Ottawa because we were cheated out of our areas of jurisdiction. That was back in 1936. I have a cassette tape in my car. I often listen to it, and I can say the speeches of today are exactly the same.

Mr. Lesage said: Masters in our own house. Mr. Johnson, Sr. said: Equality or independence. Mr. Lévesque said: Sovereignty–association. Mr. Bourassa tried twice to improve things. He passed Bill 150 and gave it up later on. What a disgrace.

We have been talking about this for a long time. The subject is definitely not new, at least not for me. In 1984, when I was elected with the Progressive Conservative Party, we talked about decentralization and accountability.

The then Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, did all he could to give some dignity back to Quebecers. You will admit he paid a steep price for that. He tried to give Quebecers fairness, not privileges, but legitimate rights that they had been asking for, for decades. Mr. Mulroney's Progressive Conservative Party was completely thrown out of Canadian politics by English Canada. There are only two members left. Why? Because Mr. Mulroney tried to give Quebec some form of legitimacy. That man ruined his political career to fight for the little legitimacy Quebecers need to develop further. This is the main reason why his party disappeared, and it is a well-known fact.

In 1984, while I was campaigning in my riding, Mr. Lévesque, who was my MPP at the time, sent his people to support me. It really happened. Mr. Lévesque talked about the "beau risque" in those days. He said: The Tories seem well-intentioned, we will give them the opportunity to grant Quebecers the legitimacy they have been requesting for so many years. He said: Let us give Mr. Mulroney a chance. I just explained to you what happened to Mr. Mulroney for trying. In 1990, when the Meech Lake Accord failed, when the present Prime Minister of Canada made sure that it failed, it was just because he wanted to get into power and to win the election here in Ottawa. He won his election, but winning that way, on the backs of Quebecers, is not an honour. That is exactly what is going on.

(1635)

Today, they are trying to tell us that the Parti Québécois is not credible, that its bill is not legitimate. We know very well that what they are trying to do is strictly an excuse, because they do not know how to justify why Quebecers should stay in this federation. This federation is costing Quebecers an enormous amount of money. I will give you an example. It is an easy one that everyone knows, but they just need to be reminded. Quebecers are not naive. They are not drawers of water any more. They have been out of there for a long time. Quebecers are intelligent people. They are educated, they understand things. They understand very well that the Canadian federation has put a huge debt burden on their shoulders. Quebecers make up 25 per cent of the Canadian population. That means that the federal government is creating a debt of \$10 billion a year for Quebecers, without their permission, because they are still a minority in this country.

Canada has an accumulated debt of \$550 billion and they are trying to convince us that this Canadian federation is good, that the country is rich. When we look at whether a country is rich or poor, we must also look at its debts. When they say that Canada has the highest standard of living in the world, we must remember that it is a standard of living that was bought on credit. Each year, we borrow money to buy food. If a family borrows every day to buy its groceries, it will maintain its standard of living but one day, it will go bankrupt. Canada is on the verge of going bankrupt.

Just on the subject of money and the economy, we Quebecers do not want to be on this sinking ship. We must take hold of our destiny to be more efficient, to be more successful and to preserve our standard of living. To say that Canada still has the highest standard of living in the world is pure hypocrisy. It is crazy to think that.

That standard of living has been bought on credit and they still keep doing it. The government does not have the courage to cut spending, because of the coming referendum. They continue to borrow on the backs of Quebecers to maintain an artificial

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standard of living. We built an artificial economy and we make people believe that the Canadian economy is doing well. It is pure hypocrisy. What we are going through is terrible. It is a disgrace. It is worse than the Second World War. If we continue on this road, Canada will be totally bankrupt in a few years. We are starting to feel it a little more every day.

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must admit there is hope, since the hon. member of the Bloc Québécois has said publicly that he was a member of the Conservative Party. Anyone who has the courage to admit that will certainly have the courage some day to admit his mistake and realize that his separatist strategy will not work. By that time, there will probably be no reason for his party to exist, and to do penance, he may have to join the two members of the Conservative Party and stay in purgatory for a while before he crosses the floor and joins the Liberal Party.

It bothers me to put my question to the hon. member of the Bloc, because I realize the Bloc Québécois does not represent the majority of Quebecers.

(1640)

It bothers me, because it is like asking the driver of a limousine to sell me his boss's car. However, since they speak for Mr. Parizeau, I will ask them the question.

Last year, when we were elected as members of the Parliament of Canada, it was a big surprise for members of the Bloc Québécois when they heard I spoke French, although I come from northern Ontario. An even bigger surprise for most Bloc members was the fact that, in northern Ontario, we have institutions for francophones: we have our own schools, universities, colleges and hospitals.

So I will put the following question to Mr. Parizeau, through his messengers: Since you claim to defend the interests of francophones outside Quebec, will francophones outside Quebec have a role to play? Do you intend to set up another committee consisting of thirteen members of the Parti Québécois and two others, perhaps a Franco-Ontarian and a Franco-Manitoban, to convince us that this is the way to go? How are you going to defend the rights of francophones outside Quebec? Are you going to say the same thing Mr. Lévesque said when he came to Sudbury, in my riding? He told Franco-Ontarians at Laurentian University: It is too bad for you, francophones living outside Quebec, but we have too many problems in Quebec to have time to deal with yours. That is what Mr. Lévesque told us in Sudbury.

So do not tell us you defend the interests of francophones outside Quebec but tell us what role you think we will play in this debate?

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): First of all, Madam Speaker, I must say that I am proud to have been with the Conservatives for six years. It is not because I am against private enterprise. I am

in favour of a suitable environment for the private sector, in order to create jobs. I think that party did a good job in this regard, even though it did not have the guts, no more than the Liberals today, to cut spending. I would have wished that they cut more spending.

Nevertheless, in 1990 I had the courage to resign, because I realized that there was nothing more to expect—

An hon. member: After Meech.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Yes, after Meech, of course. It was no longer possible to defend the interests of Quebec in Ottawa from within a federal party. It is not possible. To do so, you have to be free to speak. And the only way to speak freely on behalf of Quebec is to belong to the Bloc Québécois, of which I am one of the founding members. This is why we can now speak freely on behalf of Quebec.

We are the legitimate representatives of Quebec, since we won 54 seats out of 75. I consider that a strong legitimacy. Quebecers trust us and that is why they voted massively for us, especially French Canadians, I mean French-speaking Quebecers. Unfortunately we have not succeeded yet in rallying allophones and anglophones to our cause. I understand and respect their position.

Regarding French Canadians outside Quebec, I must say that we made more statements and asked more questions regarding the interests of francophones outside Quebec than the Liberals ever did when I was sitting as a Conservative. What we want to do is help French-speaking communities all over North America.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, to begin, I would like to go back to what my colleague for Longueuil was saying. Along the same line, this morning, I read an article on the cost of sovereignty. The problem is that it did not mention the cost of federalism.

In fact, we are forced to recognize that, for the past 25 years, we have seen the centralizing policies of the federal government turn a thriving country into one which is deeply in debt.

(1645)

No matter how loudly the Prime Minister claims in this House that we live in the most comfortable country in the world, our credit card bill is up to \$550 billion. The end of the month is going to be something else!

I would have liked to have had the time to mention all the disgraceful, useless expenses, all the waste originating on Parliament Hill and in various departments. Unfortunately I have only ten minutes. Therefore, I will focus on overlapping, duplication and the cost of federalism in general.

Let us look at the various programs the federal government implements in Quebec and which compete, in one way or

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another, with those Quebec is already offering because they are more in tune with our specific needs. Believe it or not, out of 221 federal programs and 244 Quebec programs, 197 either overlap or duplicate another. That means that we could get rid of 197 federal programs and Quebec would be better served for it.

First, we are faced with redundant administrative activities. As part of their mandate, well-meaning federal civil servants are doing exactly the same thing as their provincial counterparts acting in accordance with their mandate specific to Quebec. We pay twice for people who do a good job, but who do it twice. Once would have been enough since the job was well done.

There is worse. There is competition between various programs. Because, of course, the federal government wants to outdo the provincial government, it favours quantity over quality; the quantity of dollars it borrows, spends and, unfortunately too often, wastes. Occasionally, it resorts to conflict. We do not agree on targets. The federal program goes one way, while Quebec—and Quebec knows its constituency well and structures its objectives accordingly—goes another. Therefore, efforts and funds, instead of being pooled, are once again wasted.

At times, the programs are in direct conflict with each other. Instead of one going one way and the other one, the other way, they run counter to one another. How often—and the public is aware of this—do lawyers go to court to make representations on behalf of the federal government and object to representations on behalf of the Government of Quebec, whose lawyers are paid by Quebec taxpayers? It is our money that is financing this legal squabble. Duplication, overlap, waste.

That is not all. Think of the poor citizens. I mentioned the 221 federal programs and the 244 provincial ones. Ordinary people are completely lost. When you make an application to the federal government, you are asked whether you have already applied to the provincial government. If so, you have to wait for an answer from both the federal and the provincial governments. But the provincial government is waiting for the federal government to deal with the issue, with the result that the people are kept waiting and waiting and waiting, while the meter is ticking away on both sides. Such a waste!

Finally, I must say that, on top of all that, is an unquantifiable factor—unquantifiable because this is money that we never see—and that is opportunity cost. While these programs shoot each other down or wander one way or the other, the public waits. And while the public is waiting, we let opportunities go by, right under our very nose. All this to say that there are lengthy delays and some people get so totally discouraged that they give up projects they could have completed otherwise.

(1650)

A case in point is manpower training. Two years ago, there were 25,000 people on a waiting list for training, but the federal government did not agree with the provincial government on required courses. Even the Quebec Liberals said that Quebec knew what the needs were.

We are still waiting. Do you think that these 25,000 people who were looking for training are still waiting in line? No, they are no longer eligible, because they do not qualify for UI benefits any more. They are now on welfare and programs are shutting them out. It is a disgrace.

The costs of federalism? Let us say quickly that federal institutions definitely lack the flexibility required to compete internationally. In fact, the federal system is inflexible by definition, despite what a certain minister may say, as demonstrated by the many failed attempts to reform it.

Everything has been tried. We are not blaming the federalists. They tried everything. Mr. Lévesque, with the “beau risque”, deeply believed in it. Mr. Bourassa tried until the last second to find some accommodation. It did not work. The system is inflexible, cast in concrete. Yet, international competitiveness requires great adaptability.

I will close by addressing remarks made by some of my colleagues opposite, which I found almost insulting. We are talking about democracy, about the democratic process. We are talking about the question. You will agree with me, Madam Speaker, that if the finance minister's next tax increase was the subject of a referendum, you know very well that the people would vote against it and that this tax increase would never ever see the light of day.

That would be democracy. But it will not happen that way. It will happen through phony consultations, through passage of this tax measure here in this House. Canadians will see tax increases of up to \$120 billion, \$125 billion, \$130 billion, who knows?

The Government of Quebec is now following a process whose conclusion will be decided by the people. The people will be able to say yes or no. That is democracy. That is how it should be done and I would urge my colleagues opposite to do the same when dealing with important issues. Our Prime Minister says that the question that should be asked is: Do you want to separate from Canada?

I submit that Mr. Parizeau is asking an identical question and here is why. The Prime Minister's question essentially is this: Do you want to separate from the problem? What Mr. Parizeau says is this: Do you want to adopt the sovereignty solution? Everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. Mr. Chrétien is

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entitled to his; he can keep his problem. Yes, Madam Speaker, everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. However—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would just like to ask the hon. member not to refer to the Prime Minister by name.

Mr. de Savoye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You are quite right and I conclude by saying that I am convinced that after a clear, vigorous debate, Quebecers will make a historic decision with clear minds.

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Portneuf made a speech on the costs of federalism, but he forgot that all the costs always entail benefits as well. His colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe, who sits on the finance committee, himself estimated the costs of overlap and duplication at \$3 billion. Even Mr. Le Hir, the PQ minister, estimated the costs of overlap at \$3 billion.

But in the magic formula, they always tend to forget one thing: Quebec receives \$4 billion in equalization payments and Quebecers collect \$1.2 billion in unemployment insurance.

(1655)

In their bill, will they say that Quebecers must cover 25 per cent of the national debt, as the member just said, which amounts to \$550 billion and the costs that it will entail? Will they tell them that milk producers will lose their protection and that it will cost all milk producers millions, if not billions, of dollars?

By chance, the member's calculations overlooked that Mr. Parizeau himself had said that all federal civil servants would keep their job and would be protected. Add that to the calculations and we get into the real debate on the costs of federalism versus the costs of separatism.

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member opposite is giving me a chance to set the record straight. First of all, Quebec has 18 per cent of federal civil servants and we pay 25 per cent, so we save 7 per cent there. We must look the figures in the face.

Looking at the balance between what Quebec pays and what it gets, we see that Quebec pays roughly \$28 billion to this federal government here in Ottawa and gets about \$28 billion back. That seems fair and equitable, but there is a very big difference. While Ontarians get their money back in federal contracts, research and development and other ways, we Quebecers get our money back partly as unemployment insurance and that is unacceptable.

The cost of duplication and overlap may be \$3 billion but that is only a small part of it. The real cost is the opportunity cost; while things are happening under our noses, nothing is being done. Opportunities are slipping away from us and they could

amount to tens of billions of dollars. With an ability to act responsibly, debt problems would disappear.

I have been told many times that the Government of Quebec will not be a better manager than the federal government. Totally false! For example, it costs the federal government \$170 a year to process an employee's pay while it costs the provincial government \$70. Here alone, it costs us about 40 per cent of what it costs the federal government. I am not the one saying that; it is the Auditor General. Yes, we are more efficient and I am really eager to be able to prove it to the whole world.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two quick questions. The hon. member spoke of overlap and duplication. After one year, 60 or so programs no longer seem to overlap or duplicates one another. Was he aware of that? Is that not the direction in which we should be heading? I think that could be a solution.

I wish to mention something else. For the sake of honesty, would it not have been much easier to simply ask Quebecers what they wanted: to stay in Canada or to separate? Honestly, it would have been much better to do this than to use such a vague, fuzzy, imprecise word as «sovereignty».

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, a glass is either half empty or half full. We prefer to say that the glass is half full. And we will start by filling it. As for instances of overlap, you know as well as I do that sovereignty is the best way to eliminate them all.

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Official Opposition and the government of Mr. Parizeau are trying to convince Quebecers and Canadians that Quebec's separation is unavoidable, that federalism adversely affects development in that province, and that the consultation process recently announced is eminently democratic. At a time when countries want to unite together, including European nations, Quebec wants to separate.

I wish to take this opportunity to correct certain facts and denounce some exaggerations and overstatement by those in favour of separation.

Is Canadian federalism really an obstacle to Quebec's development? I usually do not agree with Mr. Parizeau's views.

(1700)

However, I must say that I think he is absolutely right when he says that Quebec has achieved a lot over the last 30 years.

In his speech, Mr. Parizeau mentioned, among others things, that in the 1960s Quebec was a modern state with a dynamic cultural life, that in the 1970s it had become a leader in democratization and education, and that in the 1980s Quebecers

had taken the reins of economic power and greatly increased their international presence.

Mr. Parizeau is absolutely right when he says that Quebecers should be proud of these exceptional achievements.

But where I do not agree with him and those who support separation in general is when they say that Canadian federalism is hampering Quebec's development. How can they make such a claim when the facts show unequivocally that Quebec made tremendous progress over the last 30 years, while being a part of Canada?

Indeed, it is within the Canadian federation that Quebec's quiet revolution got started and that companies such as Bombardier and Cascades were able to penetrate world markets. It is also within the Canadian federation that the work and talent of Céline Dion and the Cirque du soleil gained international recognition.

Make no mistake. I am not trying to tell you that Quebecers became so successful strictly because of Canadian federalism. What I am saying is that it is wrong to claim that federalism has impeded Quebec's development.

Is Canada really unable to recognize Quebec's specificity?

In his speech, Mr. Parizeau said that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord indicated English Canada's refusal to recognize, even symbolically, that specificity. This statement does not seem fair to me.

The Canadian federation recognized even before Meech and continues to recognize Quebec's specificity and to preserve the French fact, and not just symbolically. Let me give you some examples.

Even in 1867, the Constitution Act guaranteed the use of French in Parliament and in courts. The Constitution Act of 1982 reinforced this guarantee and made French one of the two official languages of Canada by recognizing its use in all institutions of Parliament and the government of Canada. Also, the Canadian Constitution allowed Quebec to pass language laws to promote French in Quebec.

Under the Canadian Constitution, Quebec has jurisdiction over education and has a justice system based on the Civil Code, the only one of its kind in North America. Control over these two areas is crucial to preserve and enhance Quebec's specificity.

Three out of the nine judges appointed to the Supreme Court must come from Quebec. None of the other provinces has such a guarantee.

For any issue relating to education and culture, Quebec can opt out of any Constitutional amendment to transfer provincial powers to the federal government and get full financial compensation.

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Four consecutive immigration agreements have progressively increased the role Quebec plays in this area and let the province choose its immigrants and facilitate their integration into Quebec society. The Leader of the Official Opposition himself publicly recognized the merits of these federal-provincial agreements on immigration. Let me remind members that the other provinces do not have the same rights as Quebec does in the immigration area.

According to the economic development agreement reached by Prime Minister Pearson and Mr. Lesage, then Premier of Quebec, during the 1960s, Quebec was able to create its own pension plan and set up its own deposit and investment fund.

At the international level, Ottawa-Quebec framework agreements allow Quebec to sign agreements directly with France and Belgium and, pursuant to yet another agreement, Quebec has its own seat at the Francophone Summit, something other provinces do not have.

All these examples show how biased and full of half-truths the separatists' rhetoric is.

Canadian federalism is not so centralized or centralizing that it negates or irons out regional and provincial differences. In fact, Canada is one of the least centralized countries in the whole world. Canadian federalism is not against promoting the French fact. On the contrary, it contributes to the French influence in North America.

(1705)

To conclude, I want to say that the PQ option troubles me a lot as it does most Canadians, especially francophones outside Quebec.

In British Columbia, most francophones are not only troubled but sad. Like me, they feel betrayed. In 1980, I fought with petitions and letters, etc, from Vancouver, to keep Quebec inside Canada. On the night of the referendum, I was extremely happy and, the next day, I gave the wives of eight Quebec police officers visiting Vancouver a rose and a note of thanks.

I hope to be able to do the same next year, on the night of the referendum. This time, if Quebecers say no, I will give roses to my colleagues, the women of the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the federalist members of the House and it is as if they were trying to win the championship for overstatement. They call the process proposed by the government of Quebec a fraud, immoral, illegitimate and illegal. They call it a farce. We are criticized for not asking a clear question. Yet, as my colleague from Portneuf said, the question seems perfectly clear to me: "Are you in favour of the Act passed by the

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National Assembly declaring the sovereignty of Quebec?" I think that is crystal clear: "the sovereignty of Quebec".

In fact, they are criticizing us for referring to a bill in which Quebec's sovereignty is defined. If you recall, Madam Speaker, in 1980, we were criticized for not defining our project. Now that we define it, we are criticized for it. We even go further by asking Quebec's population to participate in defining the sovereignty project. We asked Quebecers to help define the project. But still, we are told: How can you ask federalists to participate in writing a declaration of independence?

I would say that our federalist colleagues are afflicted by two diseases: schizophrenia and amnesia. Schizophrenia because they have not yet realized that there is no federalist government in Quebec City any more, but a sovereignist government, and that the majority of members representing Quebec ridings in this House are also sovereignists. They are hit by amnesia because they refuse to acknowledge that when the Parti Québécois formed the Official Opposition in the National Assembly, in spite of its political option, it recognized that a federalist party was in power and took part in the various initiatives introduced by that government.

Members will remember that the Parti Québécois spent hundreds of hours studying the Meech Lake Accord in the National Assembly and in committee, that it took part in the parliamentary committee which studied the federal government's offers that led to the Charlottetown Accord. Members will also remember that sovereignists participated in the Bélanger-Campeau Commission which proposed two alternatives, not ten but two: sovereignty and a last chance for renewed federalism. That last chance failed; it was the Charlottetown Accord. It failed miserably.

So, in keeping with the conclusions contained in the Bélanger-Campeau Commission report, which was signed by the Liberal Party in Quebec and the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, we are now moving toward the second alternative, which is sovereignty, since the first one failed.

It is now our turn to ask our federalist colleagues to take part in the process. Why are we doing this? For two simple reasons: first, because the question will be submitted to Quebecers for approval very shortly and, if the answer is yes, federalists should help define what a sovereign Quebec should be.

Second, the draft bill refers to an economic association with Canada; our federalist colleagues claim it is not possible. We want to keep the same currency; our colleagues claim it is not possible. We want to keep our citizenship; our colleagues claim it is not possible. We want to conclude international agreements; our colleagues claim it is not possible. We want them to explain

to us why it is not possible, and that is exactly why we are asking them to take part in the work of these commissions.

(1710)

In conclusion, I would invite the people of my riding of Verchères to attend the hearings of these commissions and also the people of the beautiful region where I live when I come to work here, the Outaouais region, who are particularly concerned about the consequences of the debate that will take place.

Mrs. Terrana: Madam Speaker, I do not think there is a question. Still, I would like to say something about the Charlottetown Accord. This agreement was rejected not only because of Quebec but also for a lot of other reasons, because the agreement proposed to Canadians was too vast, too complicated, and even people conversant with the issue could not understand the whole package in the Charlottetown Accord.

I think that is why it was rejected, because Native people say the same thing, everybody says the same thing, namely that the Charlottetown Accord was rejected because of its complexity. I am talking about separation, not sovereignty. In British Columbia, everybody talks about separation. I am sorry, but I found Quebec in Canada on my arrival here; I think it is a great country and that we should stay together, especially since Quebecers have contributed much to Canada and because Quebec provides a dimension that Canada needs.

[English]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, neither the Act of Union of 1842 nor the British North America Act of 1867 nor the Constitution Act of 1982 defines an orderly breakup of our great country. In the face of this fact, the reality is that all the many viewpoints put forth by the separatist forces in the absence of precedent are in many cases inaccurate projections about the way things will be in a sovereign and separate Quebec.

I believe Canada will accept separatism if it is the result of a clearly worded referendum on the issue and reflects the will of the majority of Quebecers. But whoever said outside of Quebec that sovereignty association was a negotiable option? A new and better Canada requires four strong foundations. It needs four principles to stick to.

First is responsible spending. Irresponsible government spending by this Liberal government, the massive debt it continues to add to and excessive taxation it proposes to put forward have weakened the financial foundation of the old Canada. We need to rebuild the new national home on the principle of financial responsibility. The federal government must balance its budget and keep taxes in check.

Second is the equality of provinces and citizens. Our old Canadian home is built on the fault line which separates French and English rather than on the solid ground of what all Canadians have in common. It is undermined by the linguistic,

cultural and constitutional policies that do more to divide us than to unite us. We need to rebuild our national home on the principles that all Canadians will be treated equally regardless of race, gender, language, culture, creed and that all provinces have the same powers and responsibilities over their own destinies.

Third is democracy. Our old Canadian home is built on a system that serves the political elite and only allows your input at election time. We need to rebuild our new national home on the principle that you will have more say in how the national household is run. Elected officials will be accountable all of the time, not just at election time.

Finally, a criminal justice system is the fourth principle, that is more effective, leaving less interpreted for judges, that recognizes victim rights over criminal rights.

The reality of the consequences of Quebec separation will in many ways be very costly for all Canadians. Bloc Quebecois members claim that federalism has not, cannot and will not work. They point to the failures of the Constitution Act, and the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords as sufficient proof. While I agree that these constitutional efforts represent failure, they failed everyone, not just Quebecers because the wrong people were negotiating the right things the wrong way, top down.

What the premier of the province of Quebec is presently doing by first introducing a draft bill, passing it in the legislature of Quebec first and then going to the Quebec people is making the very same mistake. It is a top down approach. It is something that may not be accepted by the rest of Canadians in Canada. Therefore, it is imperative that when Quebecers and the provincial Government of Quebec look at this issue that they address it on the basis that the simpler the question the better.

If Bloc Quebecois members are questioning why the federal government is refusing to participate in the discussions that will go across the province, it is because it has no solution. It is waiting for other people to step forward and the Reform Party is trying to fill that gap.

I believe that in the province of Quebec the voters should be asked first, then a bill drafted and negotiated. Then the people of Quebec will have the legitimacy to begin negotiations with the rest of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the Business of Supply, pursuant to Standing Order 81(17).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 132)

YEAS

Members

Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Brien
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Dalphond—Guiral
Daviault	Debien
de Savoye	Deshais
Duceppe	Dumas
Fillion	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Jacob
Landry	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Marchand	Mercier
Ménard	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Sauvageau	Tremblay (Rosemont)—40

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Anderson	Arseneault
Assad	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellemare
Benoit	Berger
Bethel	Bhaduria
Blondin—Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Chan	Chatters
Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)	Clancy

Supply

Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Copps
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	Cummins
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dingwall	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Epp	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Frazer	Fry
Gaffney	Gagliano
Galloway	Gerrard
Gilmour	Godfrey
Goodale	Gouk
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Grubel
Guarnieri	Hanrahan
Harb	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harris
Harvard	Hayes
Hickey	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Johnston
Jordan	Karyiannis
Kerpan	Keyes
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lee
Loney	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Massé
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Meredith
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Penson
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringuette—Maltais
Schmidt	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Silye	Skoke
Speaker	Speller
St. Denis	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Thompson
Torsney	Ur
Vanclief	Verran
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
White (North Vancouver)	Wood
Young	Zed—166

PAIRED «MEMBERS»

Members	
Bernier (Beauce)	Bouchard
Charest	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Dubé
Fewchuk	Gagnon (Québec)
Gerrard	Harper (Churchill)
Irwin	Kirkby
Lalonde	Langlois
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lefebvre
Lincoln	MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Minna
Ouellet	Rocheleau
Rock	St-Laurent
Steckle	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

(1740)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion negatived.

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, we have just had a very important vote, historically and for the unity of Canada and Quebec. Where is Jean Charest?

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.) moved:

That supplementary estimates (b) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, laid upon the table Wednesday, November 2, 1994, be concurred in.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that all members who have voted on the previous vote, plus I understand some who will indicate so in a moment, be deemed to have voted on the question now before the House in the following manner: Liberal members voting yea.

Mr. Duceppe: Madam Speaker, Bloc members will vote nay.

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, members of the Reform Party present this evening will vote nay, unless there are those who wish to vote otherwise.

(1745)

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, I want to indicate on behalf of the New Democratic Party members present, the member for Burnaby—Kingsway and myself, that we would vote nay on this motion.

Mr. Bhaduria: Madam Speaker, I will be voting yes.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 133)

YEAS

Members	
Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellemare	Berger
Bethel	Bhaduria
Blondin—Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Belair
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Chan
Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Copps
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Discepola	Dromisky
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gaffney

Gagliano
Gerrard
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Jordan
Keys
Kraft Sloan
Lee
MacAulay
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette—Maltais
Shepherd
Skoke
St. Denis
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Ur
Verran
Wappel
Whelan
Young

Galloway
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Harb
Hickey
Hubbard
Ifody
Karygiannis
Knutson
Lastewka
Loney
MacDonald
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murphy
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peters
Phinney
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Serré
Sheridan
Speller
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
Wood
Zed—134

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Bachand
Benoit
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Canuel
Chatters
Dalphond—Guiral
Debien
Deshaies
Dumas
Fillion
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin
Grubel
Guimond
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jacob
Kerpan
Laurin
Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Mayfield
Mercier
Ménard
Paré
Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau
Sauvageau
Silye
Stinson
Taylor
Tremblay (Rosemont)

Asselin
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Bélisle
Caron
Cummins
Davialt
de Savoye
Duceppe
Epp
Frazer
Gilmour
Gouk
Guay
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hoepfner
Johnston
Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Shefford)
Marchand
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith
Nunez
Penson
Plamondon
Robinson
Schmidt
Speaker
Strahl
Thompson
White (North Vancouver)—74

Supply

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.) moved:

That supplementary estimates (c) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, laid upon the table Thursday, November 17, 1994, be concurred in.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you will find consent that the members who have voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted in the following way: Liberal members and the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville voting yea.

Mr. Duceppe: Madam Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois support the motion.

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, members of the Reform Party present this evening will vote yea, unless there are those members who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Hart: Madam Speaker, I wish to advise the Chair that I was absent for the first two votes but I will be voting with my party.

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the Chair that I too was absent for the first two votes and I will be voting with my party.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, New Democrats present vote nay.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 134)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Allmand
Anderson
Assad
Augustine
Bachand
Bakopoulos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Berger
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bhaduria
Bodnar
Boudria
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Brushett
Belair
Campbell
Canuel
Catterall
Chatters

Alcock
Anawak
Arseneault
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Benoit
Bergeron
Bethel
Blondin—Andrew
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélisle
Canniss
Caron
Chan
Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)

Supply

Clancy	Cohen
Collenette	Collins
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	Debien
de Savoye	Deshaies
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dingwall	Discepola
Dromisky	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Epp	Fillion
Finestone	Flis
Fontana	Frazer
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Galloway
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gerrard
Gilmour	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Grubel	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Hanrahan	Harb
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hart
Harvard	Hayes
Hickey	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Jacob
Johnston	Jordan
Karygiannis	Kerpan
Keyes	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Landry
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loney	Loubier
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marchi
Marleau	Massé
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Mercier
Meredith	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Ménard	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Paré	Patry
Payne	Penson
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette-Maltais	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Serré	Shepherd
Sheridan	Silye
Skoke	Speaker
Speller	St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Thompson	Torsney
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Ur
Vanclief	Verran
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
White (North Vancouver)	Wood
Young	Zed—208

NAYS

Members
Taylor—2

Robinson

PAIRED «MEMBERS»

Members

nil/aucun

(1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Eggleton moved that Bill C-63, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1995, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time.)

Mr. Eggleton moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find consent that we apply the vote taken on supplementary estimates (b) to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 135)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellemare	Berger
Bethel	Bhaduria
Blondin-Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Bélair
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Copps
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Discepola	Dromisky
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Galloway
Gerrard	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keyes	Knutson

Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lee	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McWhinney
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette—Maltais	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Skoke	Speller
St. Denis	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Torsney
Ur	Vanclief
Verran	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Wood
Young	Zed—134

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Asselin
Bachand	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chatters	Cummins
Dalphond—Guiral	Davialt
Debien	de Savoye
Deshaies	Duceppe
Dumas	Epp
Fillion	Frazer
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gilmour
Godin	Gouk
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hart
Hayes	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Jacob
Johnston	Kerpan
Landry	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Marchand	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Mercier
Meredith	Ménard
Nunez	Paré
Penson	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Robinson	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Speaker
Stinson	Strahl
Taylor	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	White (North Vancouver)—76

Supply

PAIRED «MEMBERS»

Members

Bernier (Beauce)	Bouchard
Charest	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Dubé
Fewchuk	Gagnon (Québec)
Gerrard	Harper (Churchill)
Irwin	Kirkby
Lalonde	Langlois
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lefebvre
Lincoln	MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Minna
Ouellet	Rocheleau
Rock	St-Laurent
Steckle	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Maheu in the chair.)

The Deputy Chairman: House in committee of the whole on Bill C-63, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1995.

(Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.)

(Schedule A agreed to.)

(Schedule B agreed to.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

(Preamble agreed to.)

(Title agreed to.)

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Chairman, we are working very diligently. I have a question with respect to rules for the President of the Treasury Board.

Could he give an assurance the bill is in its usual form and that there is no change of votes in the bill?

Mr. Eggleton: Madam Chairman, I can give the assurance that the form of the bill is the same as passed in previous years.

(Bill reported.)

(1755)

Mr. Eggleton moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken on the main motion for second reading to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 135*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Eggleton moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken at report stage of the supply bill to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 135]

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find consent for the House to proceed now with the motion on Bill C-46, the Department of Industry motion for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken on the main motion for third reading of the supply bill to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 135]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from December 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-216, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act (jury service), be read the third time and passed; and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to order made Tuesday, December 6, 1994, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on Mr. Hanrahan's amendment at third reading stage of Bill C-216, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act (jury service).

The question is on the amendment.

As is the practice, the division will be taken row by row starting with the mover and then proceeding with those in favour of the amendment sitting on the same side of the House as the mover to my left and then those sitting on the other side will be called.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 136)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Chatters
Cummins	Epp
Frazer	Gilmour
Gouk	Grubel
Hanrahan	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harris
Hart	Hayes
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Johnston	Kerpan
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith	Penson
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Speaker
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson	White (North Vancouver)—34

NAYS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bachand
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Berger	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bethel
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Bélisle

Campbell
Canuel
Catterall
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Cohen
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
Daviault
de Savoye
DeVillers
Discepola
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Fillion
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Jacob
Karygiannis
Knutson
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Lee
Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier
MacDonald
Malhi
Manley
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mercier
Mitchell
Murray
Nunez
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robinson
Serré
Sheridan
Speller
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
Wood
Zed—171

Cannis
Caron
Chan
Clancy
Collenette
Copp
Crawford
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
Deshaies
Dhaliwal
Dromisky
Dumas
Easter
English
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Galloway
Gerrard
Godin
Graham
Grose
Guay
Harb
Hickey
Hubbard
Ifody
Jordan
Keys
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loney
MacAulay
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marchand
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murphy
Ménard
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peters
Phinney
Pillitteri
Pomerleau
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette-Maltais
Sauvageau
Shepherd
Skoke
St. Denis
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Torsney
Ur
Verran
Wappel
Whelan
Young

PAIRED «MEMBERS»

	Members
Bernier (Beauce)	Bouchard
Charest	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Dubé
Fewchuk	Gagnon (Québec)
Gerrard	Harper (Churchill)
Irvin	Kirkby
Lalonde	Langlois
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lefebvre
Lincoln	MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Minna
Ouellet	Rocheleau
Rock	St-Laurent
Steckle	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

(1805)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

BANKRUPTCY ACT

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-237, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act (priority of claims), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to order made Wednesday, December 7, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on second reading stage of Bill C-237, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act (priority of claims).

The question is on the motion.

(1810)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 137)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Assad
Asselin	Augustine
Bachand	Bakopanos
Barnes	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bethel	Bodnar
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bélair
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Clancy
Cohen	Cowling
Culbert	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	Debien
de Savoye	Deshaies
Discepola	Dromisky
Dumas	Easter
Fillion	Fontana
Galloway	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Harvard
Hickey	Ianno
Jacob	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Landry
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	MacDonald
Malhi	Maloney
Marchand	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McWhinney	Mercier
Murphy	Murray

Private Members' Business

Ménard	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proud
Robinson	Sauvageau
Speller	Szabo
Taylor	Telegdi
Terrana	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Wood—85	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Anderson
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bellemare
Benoit	Berger
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Brushett
Bryden	Campbell
Cannis	Chan
Chatters	Collenette
Collins	Crawford
Duhamel	Eggleton
Epp	Finestone
Frazer	Gaffney
Gerrard	Gilmour
Godfrey	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Grose	Grubel
Hanrahan	Harb
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hayes
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Hopkins	Johnston
Jordan	Kerpan
Loney	MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley	Marleau
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mitchell
Patry	Penson
Peters	Phinney
Pillitteri	Reed
Ringuette—Maltais	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Serré
Shepherd	Silye
Speaker	St. Denis
Stinson	Strahl
Thalheimer	Thompson
Vanclief	Walker
Wappel	White (North Vancouver)
Young—79	

PAIRED «MEMBERS»

Members

Bernier (Beauce)	Bouchard
Charest	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Dubé
Fewchuk	Gagnon (Québec)
Gerrard	Harper (Churchill)
Irwin	Kirkby
Lalonde	Langlois
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lefebvre
Lincoln	MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Minna
Ouellet	Rocheleau
Rock	St-Laurent
Steckle	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

(1820)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, an act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you will find that there is unanimous consent for the following: if a recorded division is to be taken on the motion before this House this evening, that it be deferred until next Tuesday, at 5.30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight to speak to the bill tabled by the hon. member for York South—Weston, which would delete section 745 of the Criminal Code. This section gives an opening to those sentenced to life imprisonment in Canada because they were found guilty of murder.

The purpose of the bill is simply to delete this section of the Criminal Code. When I read a bill like this one, I always feel embarrassed, because there are two aspects to be considered in such situations.

First of all, we should put ourselves in the shoes of the victims and their families, who went through the horrible tragedy of seeing loved ones murdered. We say to ourselves: It is quite normal for people found guilty of such crimes to go to prison for the rest of their lives, since it was the sentence handed down by the court, the jury, the judge.

Yet, other considerations must be taken into account. First, Parliament put this provision into the Code following the great debate held in the mid-1970s on the abolition of capital punishment in Canada.

As you know, Canada abolished the death penalty in 1976 following a great debate in Canadian society. Those opposed to doing away with the death penalty demanded that lawmakers see to it that the people convicted of first- or second-degree murder in some circumstances be incarcerated for life.

However, Parliament introduced into the Criminal Code a provision allowing those who have served 15 years of a life sentence to apply for parole to the Chief Justice in their province.

Private Members' Business

A whole process is then initiated to review their applications. A jury is empanelled to represent citizens and hear the application.

(1825)

This is not an automatic process, therefore, in that the application is reviewed. When making its determination, the jury must take into account the character of the applicant, his conduct while serving his sentence and the nature of the offence for which he was convicted.

The members of the jury represent Canadian citizens and they must make a decision based on the information provided by prison authorities. They must decide whether to reject the application, accept it at a later time, or let the applicant be paroled. In other words, this provision in our Criminal Code does not mean that those who serve life sentences can be set free after 15 years.

Why did Parliament introduce this provision in the Criminal Code? I believe it was felt, rightly so—as this was the prevailing philosophy back in the seventies and still is—that after a person has spent 15 years in jail, it might not be a bad idea to see if he should be paroled.

This has nothing to do with erasing a past mistake or offence: It is simply a matter of providing the possibility of serving one's sentence outside, instead of being kept in jail. The whereabouts of a person released on parole are still monitored and the parolee must still meet a number of conditions in order to continue to qualify for parole.

I think that the lawmakers were right to include this provision in the Criminal Code. They believed that after 15 years, a person who had committed a horrific crime could change, after thinking about what he had done and after receiving counselling from professionals while in prison. Of course, there are many people who believe—and this is somewhat the reasoning behind the motion of the hon. member for York South—Weston—that if a person has committed a crime and been sentenced to a certain number of years in prison, he must serve out his full sentence. He did what he did, the person must be locked up and a rigid approach must be taken.

However, this mind-set seems to be characterized by vengeance and the belief in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It is an approach that denies the possibility that human beings can change and improve, that under certain circumstances, they can adopt a different attitude, and once released, they will no longer necessarily pose a threat to society.

(1830)

In closing, I would like to say that since this provision was first introduced into the Criminal Code, of all the applications received, 128 have been deemed admissible. Of the 128 inmates concerned, 71 have actually applied for parole. Of course, many

realized that because of their conduct and the nature of the crime they had committed, there was no chance at all of their being granted parole. Of all the applications received, only 43 have actually been reviewed. Some were turned down, some saw their sentences reduced, and some were given a conditional release.

I think it is fortunate that under our Criminal Code, individuals can take advantage of an opportunity like this one. It is not very permissive. Canadian citizens who are on the jury still have the right to consider the case and to pass judgment on behalf of society. We then have an opportunity to consider the individual's potential for rehabilitation and ability to make a valid contribution to society.

I think Canadian society should be proud of having such provisions in its statutes. It shows we are not a closed society, not an intrinsically punitive society, and that we still provide certain opportunities for offenders who have served part of their sentence and who have rehabilitated themselves.

I think everyone will agree it is normal for people who have committed a crime to be punished, and no one in my party wants to make it easy for these people, but I think it is important to have a provision on the books that shows we do not give up entirely on people who have the potential to be rehabilitated.

Consequently, I will vote against the bill, because I believe that in Canada, this is a valid and useful provision to have in the Criminal Code.

[English]

Mr. Paul Zed (Fundy—Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today in this House to call for the repeal of section 745 of the Criminal Code. I speak today from my own beliefs and most important, the beliefs of the many constituents of the riding of Fundy—Royal.

My riding has been concerned about the implications of section 745 for many months. Fundy—Royal residents have firm beliefs about justice. That sentiment can best be summed up in a few words: A life sentence should mean jail for life, or at least for 25 years. Under the present law that potentially has been in jeopardy.

A petition campaign spearheaded by Constable Evan Scott of the Rothesay Regional Police in Rothesay, New Brunswick calling for the repeal of section 745 has been both welcomed and endorsed throughout New Brunswick. I gave the petition my support in a May 17, 1994 letter to the Minister of Justice.

In the letter I expressed my view that to allow a judicial review for persons who may receive parole after 15 years for first degree murder, the worst possible crime in the Criminal Code, is unacceptable. I feel it is imperative to our judicial system that once an individual has been found guilty by his peers for a heinous crime that the sentence provided by the judge should be carried out in its entirety.

Private Members' Business

I have chosen to speak on this bill today because I have examined the issues surrounding the section introduced in 1976. I have balanced the merits of those arguments with the values of my constituents and I find that the present legislation is unacceptable.

The facts are staggering indeed. A criminal serving a 25 year sentence can be given a 40 per cent reduction in his sentence. Seventy-two per cent of the applicants under this section were allowed to walk out under early parole. Over the next 15 years there are approximately 600 killers who are eligible to seek early parole.

Anyone can submit an application irrespective of the brutality of the crime and at public expense these applications are permitted to be made. Therein lies part of my problem with section 745. Can we imagine the financial cost to the public purse if each of the more than 600 convicted murderers in our prisons today filed for a reduction in their parole eligibility?

(1835)

Imagine with that large number of cases the series of precedents which could be created. Section 745 could become an impressive mechanism that further restricts the rights of victims.

For example, in the *Queen v. Swietlinski*, Judge O'Driscoll declared the victim impact statements inadmissible in a section 745 procedure because they were intended to assist in the earlier sentencing process. Therefore they were not relevant to the issue before the jury considering the criminal's application.

Public attitudes have changed since 1975. Today society overwhelmingly affirms that victims, and in the case of a murderer, the victim's family, should have a greater influence in the parole system. This belief is representative of the notion that crime affects society and the victim's family. It is no longer sufficient that the criminal's sentencing and parole be treated independently from the suffering of the victim's family.

When section 745 was drafted its primary concern was how to integrate the convict back into society as quickly as possible. The procedure to determine whether a convict deserves an early parole eligibility is much easier for the convict than a regular trial.

Let me share some examples I find troubling. The jury only needs two-thirds majority instead of 100 per cent agreement. Most of the evidence presented in the hearing comes from those who seek the convicts early release, not the victim's family.

It appears to me that the process is structured in such a manner that the welfare of the victim's family is completely ignored. If I had to choose between this system and one that gives consideration to the victim's needs to believe that justice has been done I would choose the victim's rights every time.

A thorough examination of section 745 warrants that hard questions be answered. Who is the Criminal Code supposed to protect? What is in the best interests of society? I think public confidence in the legal system is of the utmost importance in any democratic society. Is the Criminal Code to be weighted in favour of rehabilitation or the principle that a sentence for serious crimes must be implemented in full? Will criminals now realizing their opportunity to shorten their sentences by 40 per cent subvert the rehabilitation process? Will the public begin to regard 15 years as a life sentence? If this occurs the public wrath should be furious. Let us forgo that process and repeal section 745.

In closing I share the concerns of my constituents in Fundy—Royal, New Brunswick. The current method of determining a convict's eligibility must correspond with what is reasonable. Other members of this House have called for the repeal of section 745. They have often cited the high profile cases of Clifford Olsen who savagely raped and murdered 11 young children.

There is a case which occurred within my own riding. Less than two weeks ago a man who admitted he shot an innocent victim in the back 16 years ago was before a jury explaining why he deserved a reduction in his parole eligibility. When I heard about this case I hardened my resolve. I thought about the family of that victim.

For his family and for the thousands of family members who will be in a similar situation as over 600 convicted murderers apply for early parole eligibility over the next 15 years, I ask and urge that section 745 of the Criminal Code be repealed so that justice can be done and a life sentence will mean at least 25 years.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and also for producing the numbers. That will save me some time. I am here to support the private member's bill of the hon. member for York South—Weston to abolish section 745 of the Criminal Code.

Something rather strange happened to me a while ago. I had to cross the floor and was in the government lobby. One Liberal friend saw me there and said: "Oh goody, you have seen the light". Well, I have some bad news for him.

(1840)

I am really happy that some people from that side of the House have seen the light. They have seen the light to such poor legislation and are bringing forward a bill of this type and finding support for it even though it was a piece of legislation that was brought in a few years ago by the very same party.

This section of course allows convicted murderers to apply for a review to lessen their period of parole eligibility. It gives them a process to return to society before serving their entire sentence.

Some of those speaking to this bill have their own opinions on why a convicted murderer should serve a life sentence for killing an innocent victim. Many would admit life should be life, or we in this House should bring back the death penalty. I would challenge the government of the day to seriously consider having a referendum to let the people of this nation decide whether we should have the death penalty.

We are not here to argue that stand. We are here to argue why 25 years in prison should be the minimum penalty for taking another life and how 25 years is just retribution for inflicting untold grief upon the family and friends of a victim of such a heinous crime.

People have free choice. That free choice may include kidnapping, robbery or murder, taking another life. Notice the emphasis is placed on their choice to kill an innocent victim.

When a murderer is convicted in court, the presiding judge decides from the evidence heard what the sentence should be. The judge listens to all the evidence. In a case that clearly demonstrates that the murderer had no concern for human life and no remorse for executing an innocent victim the judge knows a life sentence is just. In those circumstances, the judge knows 25 years without parole is the right sentence for the crime.

I hear from the friends and families of murder victims how they become members of an exclusive club, a club whose only requirement for membership is having one of their own murdered. These club members cannot apply for a reduction of the life sentence given to them for their loved ones. The sentence which entitles them to be members of this exclusive club is indeed for life. Every day for the rest of their lives these club members will suffer. They will be filled with sorrow and will wonder what they could have done to prevent the loss.

Those who murder do not have to serve a similar sentence. They are still alive. They still enjoy the company of others, the benefits of good food, excellent health care and recreation facilities. All this is paid for by the average hardworking taxpayers like those they killed. The only hardship murderers must endure is their restricted access to society. Yet section 745 gives murderers a chance to reduce their separation from law-abiding citizens. That is not justice.

That exclusive club has an annual fee. The fee is paid on every birthday, every Christmas, every occasion that family and friends gather. The memory of the murder victim continues to haunt their thoughts. They simply cannot apply to have their memories reduced. These club members will shed tears where there should be warm embraces and pleasant thoughts of times gone by and times to come. They receive no sentence reduction whatsoever.

Private Members' Business

These club members are reminded every day of their loss, but that is not the only punishment this current justice system inflicts upon the survivors. This current justice system punishes the survivors further. The friends and family of a murder victim must endure further heartache when murderers apply for early parole. When murderers apply for early parole after 15 years they bring back all the terror and heartache that entered the souls of the family members at the time they were first told of the death.

Why do we continue to punish those who are victims of crime and those who are innocent? I have listened to what a section 745 hearing inflicts upon the survivors. They say they are once again forced to revisit the abyss, to relive the nightmare and all the pain and horror that goes with it. When a murderer applies for a section review of this nature, that is exactly what happens. What more needs to be said? What more evidence needs to be stated that section 745 must be repealed?

(1845)

If Canadians look at the record of the Parole Board rulings, Canadians see patronage appointees who have little concern for murdered victims or their survivors. These appointees are notorious for listening to bleeding hearts who say the murderer has changed, he has remorse or he has found God and is intending to care for orphans and the elderly now.

These appointees hear reports from psychologists or psychiatrists who have spent a minimum amount of time with the murderer and have decided the murderer has changed. If there is one thing for sure I have learned since becoming a justice critic it is that the worst psychopaths know how to work the system. They know how to con political appointees who only want to follow the mandate of a bleeding heart government. These bleeding hearts believe anyone can be rehabilitated or can feel true remorse for the most heinous of crimes.

All that is needed to believe any political appointees can be conned is to remember that one out of three is given early release by past appointed employees of the Parole Board and one out of three returns to prison.

Section 745 must be repealed so the members of this House can say to the survivors of murdered loved ones they have been given a life sentence, the least we can do is give the murderer 25 years without parole. The most we can do is offer Canadians some minor peace in the knowledge that those who have committed the vilest of crimes will not have early parole.

Let this House recognize the eternal sacrifice of those murdered and eternal pain suffered by their family and friends. Let this House support this bill to end section 745.

In conclusion, I would like to point out one thing that was sent around by one of the members from the Liberal caucus as to reasons why we should not repeal this. It states: "The Liberal Party has never advocated a system of justice based on revenge.

Private Members' Business

We do not adhere to an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, principles espoused by the Reform Party”.

I resent that kind of a statement. What we are calling for is not revenge, it is called justice, something this government has not a clue about and it has demonstrated it year after year in all the legislation it has brought forward.

I do believe that if this government wakes up and realizes there is such a word as revenge, and if we do not start providing justice to our society, revenge is exactly what we can look forward to. It had better wake up to the fact that Canadians are not happy with this justice system. If it does not believe me turn around and ask, it will find out or stand on any street corner in any city in this country and just ask them how they feel. I do not believe that is the Liberal way so I do not think we will look forward to seeing that happen.

Please, I ask everyone here to seriously consider the victims. Remember the victims. Do not vote to keep 745.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to support the private member's bill put forward by the member for York South—Weston.

Bill C-226 would repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 745 allows prisoners given a life sentence for such crimes as first and second degree murder the opportunity to apply for early parole after serving only 15 years of their life sentence.

I want to give a little background. Section 745 was introduced in 1976 by the Solicitor General of the day who currently sits as the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Section 745 was part of Bill C-84 and this bill also abolished capital punishment and established two categories of murder, first and second degree. Both categories of this horrendous crime carry minimum sentences of life imprisonment.

Let me be clear. When Reformers and millions of Canadians speak of life imprisonment for despicable crimes such as murder, it must mean life imprisonment.

A number of states in the U.S. have taken the right steps. They have abolished parole boards to ensure that criminals serve their entire sentence no matter how small or how large their crime.

(1850)

Here in Canada we maintain parole boards which increasingly come under fire for releasing dangerous criminals into our society. We maintain section 745, giving murders, people who commit horrendous crimes in our society, the opportunity to apply for early parole.

As well, as I understand it their chances of being successful under section 745, under that appeal, are pretty good. As of May 1994, 60 applications have been heard under this section and 43

of these 60 have received some form of early parole. That is about a 72 per cent success rate. That is absolutely unacceptable in Canadian society.

It is my opinion that if the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who introduced Bill C-84, had his way ruthless killers would be out walking the streets after serving only 15 years.

The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce argues that keeping someone in prison for 25 years serves little purpose. For a crime as heinous as murder, I and millions of Canadians say that 25 years are not nearly enough.

In addition to the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce there are many other bleeding heart Liberals in this government who contend that 25 years—

Ms. Clancy: I am proud to be one.

Mr. Harris: There are many other bleeding heart Liberals in this government who contend that 25 years in prison is a form of cruel and unusual punishment and that section 745 gives the prisoner some hope or something to look forward to after he has completed 15 years of his sentence.

To them I say what about the cruel and unusual punishment of the victim? To them I say what of the cruel and unusual punishment inflicted on the victim's family or the victim's community? What of the cruel and unusual punishment that is inflicted on society as a result of the fear that is created from the knowledge that ruthless killers are out early and walking the streets? What about that cruel and unusual punishment? They do not speak of that when they talk about letting prisoners out early, about letter murders out on to the streets.

The second chance that section 745 awards to criminals is denied to the victims and the victim's families. They do not have a second chance to undo a vicious crime such as murder.

In a statement to the House on October 4, I brought to the attention of all members the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada had recently allowed a first degree murderer another chance at early parole under section 745 because during his first hearing the crown consistently and improperly appealed to the jury's passions. Does that mean the crown was describing the vicious crime this person had committed? This is improperly appealing to the jury's passions.

It would do well for the bleeding heart Liberals opposite to listen to this. This man was convicted in 1986 for stabbing his victim 132 times—are you listening over there—and using five different knives in the process. Because of section 745 it is possible that this vicious killer will be out walking the streets after serving less than 25 years.

In this specific case I would not hesitate to go beyond simple repeal of section 745. I would reinstate capital punishment for this kind of crime. At very worst this government, this House,

should recommend that such a vicious criminal spend the rest of his life behind bars.

(1855)

On July 5, 1994 the government created a national crime prevention council, no doubt at great expense to Canadian taxpayers. This council reports to the Minister of Justice on various crime prevention strategies. I would hope that this council would take note of the proceedings here this evening and consider advising the minister to abolish section 745 in the interests and safety of Canadians and our communities, and to bolster the sagging confidence level that Canadians have in the criminal justice system in this country.

I would hope also that the bleeding heart Liberals present here tonight are listening to the speeches from their own colleagues and from members of the Reform Party. I would hope that this council would listen to the pleas of millions of Canadians who are crying for a reinstatement of the death penalty for crimes such as murder.

There are some major problems with the procedure in the way applications are heard under section 745. For instance, under this section hearing the criminal cannot be subject to questioning regarding his offence. Give us a break in this country. However, he can give oral evidence as to his successes and what a good person he has been while in prison.

There have also been cases in the past in which Correctional Services Canada has used the Privacy Act, if you can imagine, to deny the crown information relating to the criminal's behaviour in jail. This amounts to suppression of information which could have a profound effect on whether that person should be out.

Last but not least, it is the taxpayers who are paying for these appeal hearings. In the light of these costs, it is absolutely incomprehensible that the bleeding hearts in this government would continue to support section 745.

The continuation of section 745 is simply not acceptable to the victims of ruthless killers in this country. It is not acceptable to the Canadian people. I hope that the bleeding hearts in this government, in this Parliament, will for once listen to the voice of the Canadian people.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Adjournment Debate

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Accordingly, pursuant to the order made earlier this day, the division stands deferred to Tuesday, December 13, at 5.30 p.m.

Mrs. Stewart: Madam Speaker, I would like to suggest to the House that we view the clock as reading 7.07 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

(1900)

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, yesterday I addressed a very simple question to the Minister of Justice. I do not think the seven million gun owners out there will be very pleased with his response.

The minister dismissed opposition from the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta justices ministers, saying:

I have a decent respect for the opinion of my provincial and territorial counterparts but in the final analysis this is a matter for this federal government to deal with.

As I said in my question yesterday, the legislative assembly of the province of Saskatchewan has voted unanimously, all three parties, to oppose any further gun controls. The chief law enforcement officer for the province of Saskatchewan has written to the minister expressing his government's opposition. He is concerned about how he will be able to enforce gun control laws which the majority of voters in the province know are unfair and unnecessary to control violent crime.

In September the minister told over 10,000 law-abiding, responsible gun owners that he is not interested in making laws by taking a head count and yet he continually refers to bogus polls, which is a head count, to support his biased view that the majority of Canadians actually support his useless, ineffective gun control proposals.

A Ph.D. with 30 years of experience who teaches an honours research design and analysis course at Concordia University described an Angus Reid poll on gun control as fraudulent,

Adjournment Debate

saying his students found a dozen fatal flaws in the five questions asked in the minister's favourite poll and stated: "Any student who submitted such biased questions would fail the course". This is what the minister is appealing to.

When a Gallup poll asked a well worded question, 69 per cent of the respondents felt passing more severe laws over legitimate gun owners would have very little influence on criminals. This is the exact opposite view expressed in the minister's oft quoted poll.

If the minister is going to govern by polls then he must ensure that the polls ask fair and unbiased questions. Further, if he really believes in implementing laws which reflect the will of the majority, he should at least allow the members of this House to have a free vote on the gun control proposals.

Frankly, I do not think the minister is a big believer in true democracy or direct democracy. I think his answer to my question yesterday proves that specifically.

I specifically asked the minister if he had taken a head count of all the justice ministers in this country to find out which of them support his proposals and which do not. The Minister of Justice answered "we govern by what is right", referring to the Liberal gun control proposals tabled last week in the House of Commons. He dictated that this is the government's assessment of what is right.

What have Canadians learned from the minister's reply? We learned that he has indeed consulted "with officials of every provincial and territorial attorneys general ministry" but that he does not care what they think. He is going to do whatever he thinks is right, not what the majority of Canadians think is right, not what the provincial justice ministers think is right even though they are the ones who have to enforce these ineffective gun control laws, not what the police on the street think is right, not even what the provincial legislators think is right, and certainly not what the majority of our municipal governments think is right.

His only justification for this intrusive and costly bureaucratic, make work project is that he and the Liberal cabinet think it is right. If Canadians thought for a moment that registering their rifles and shotguns and confiscating guns from law-abiding firearms owners might actually reduce violent crime and stop criminals from acquiring guns, they might actually support him. But they do not.

They know criminals do not obey any laws, especially gun control laws, and criminals will always be able to get their guns.

In conclusion, unfortunately democracy and majority rule take a back seat to what the Liberals think is right. Frankly, I fear a government that will not listen to the people a lot more than I fear a law-abiding citizen with a gun.

I ask my question again: Has the minister taken a head count of all the justice ministers in this country to find out which of them support his proposals and which do not and could he share the results of this head count with all Canadians?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Minister of Justice. While there were a number of comments in the hon. member's intervention that I could answer I shall somehow find the fortitude to resist.

I am certain that all Canadians support the initiatives of the government that enhance the safety of our communities, whether those communities are urban or rural. The criminal and accidental misuse of guns is just as prevalent in the rural areas of Canada as it is in the urban areas.

Studies show the homicide rate in rural areas is 50 per cent higher than in the urban environment. In Saskatchewan, for example, between 1989 and 1992 there was an average of 5.1 suicides by firearms for every 100,000 residents compared to the national average of 3.8.

The legislation that will be introduced in the new year will not prevent farmers and ranchers, hunters or target shooters from using their firearms for recreational pursuits, in the case of ranchers for predatory control purposes. The minister has made this very clear during his extensive discussions and consultations with firearms' owners and users in all areas of the country.

The government's first objective, supported by all firearms interest groups, is to increase criminal sanctions for the use of firearms in the commission of crime. Second, and receiving broad support, are moves that will be made to control and penalize the illegal trafficking and smuggling of firearms. The last major objective is to address the ownership and use of all firearms in Canada.

I believe, this side believes, the government believes that our gun control law is accepted by a great number of Canadians. I am so glad to see the new politics from these gentlemen.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5) the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.07 p.m.)

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